

A JEWEL OF THE SEAS

BY JESSIE KAUFMAN



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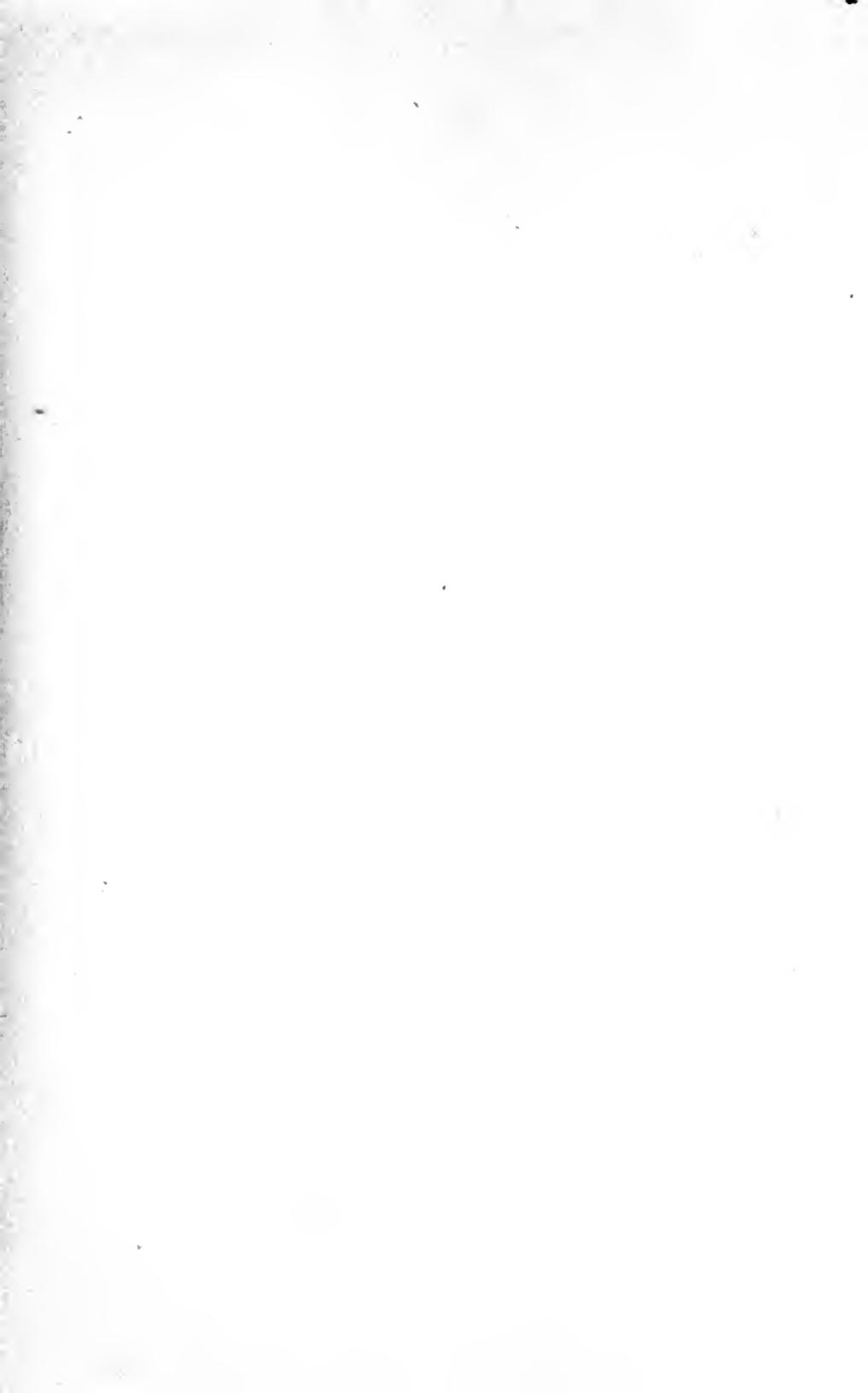


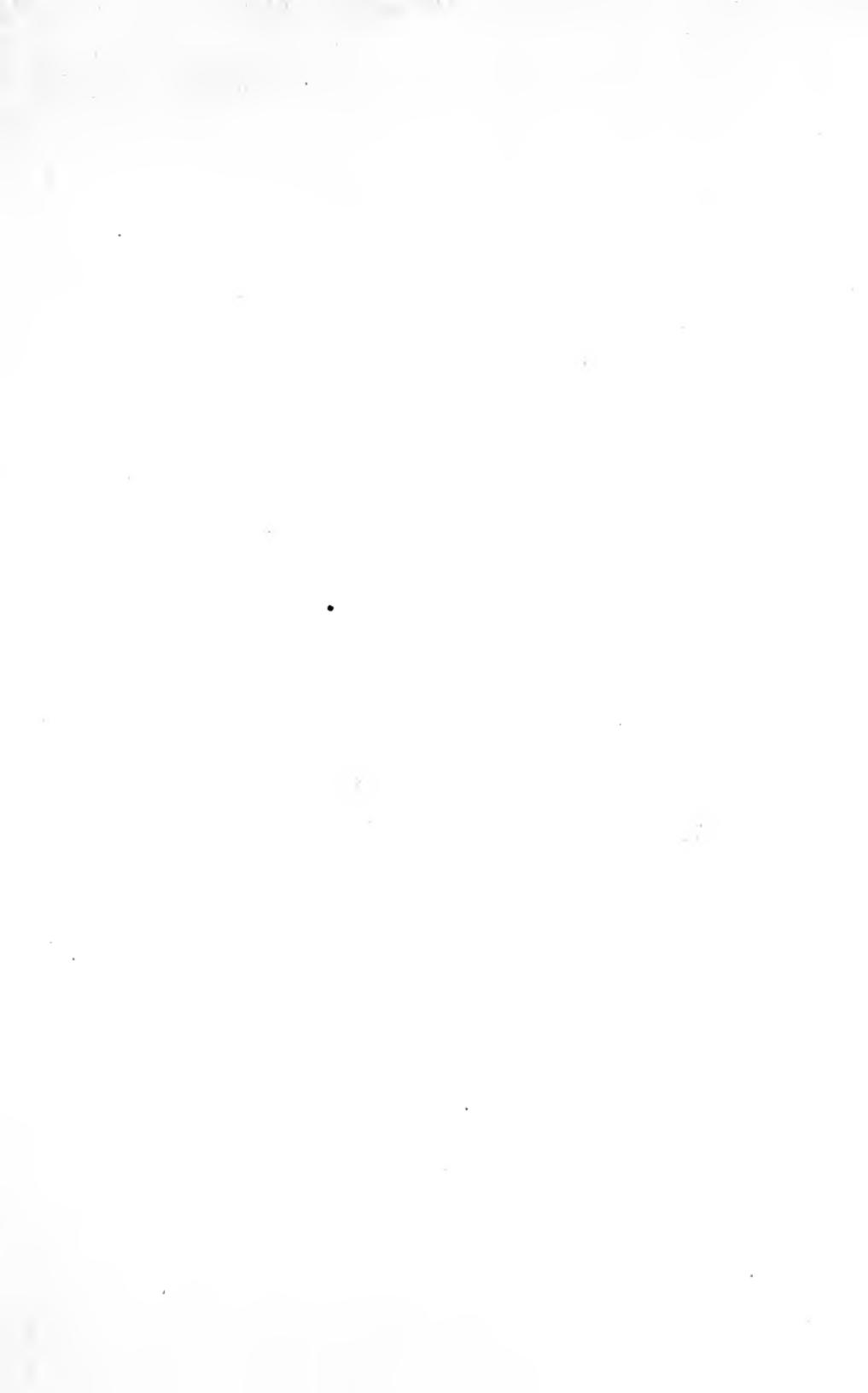
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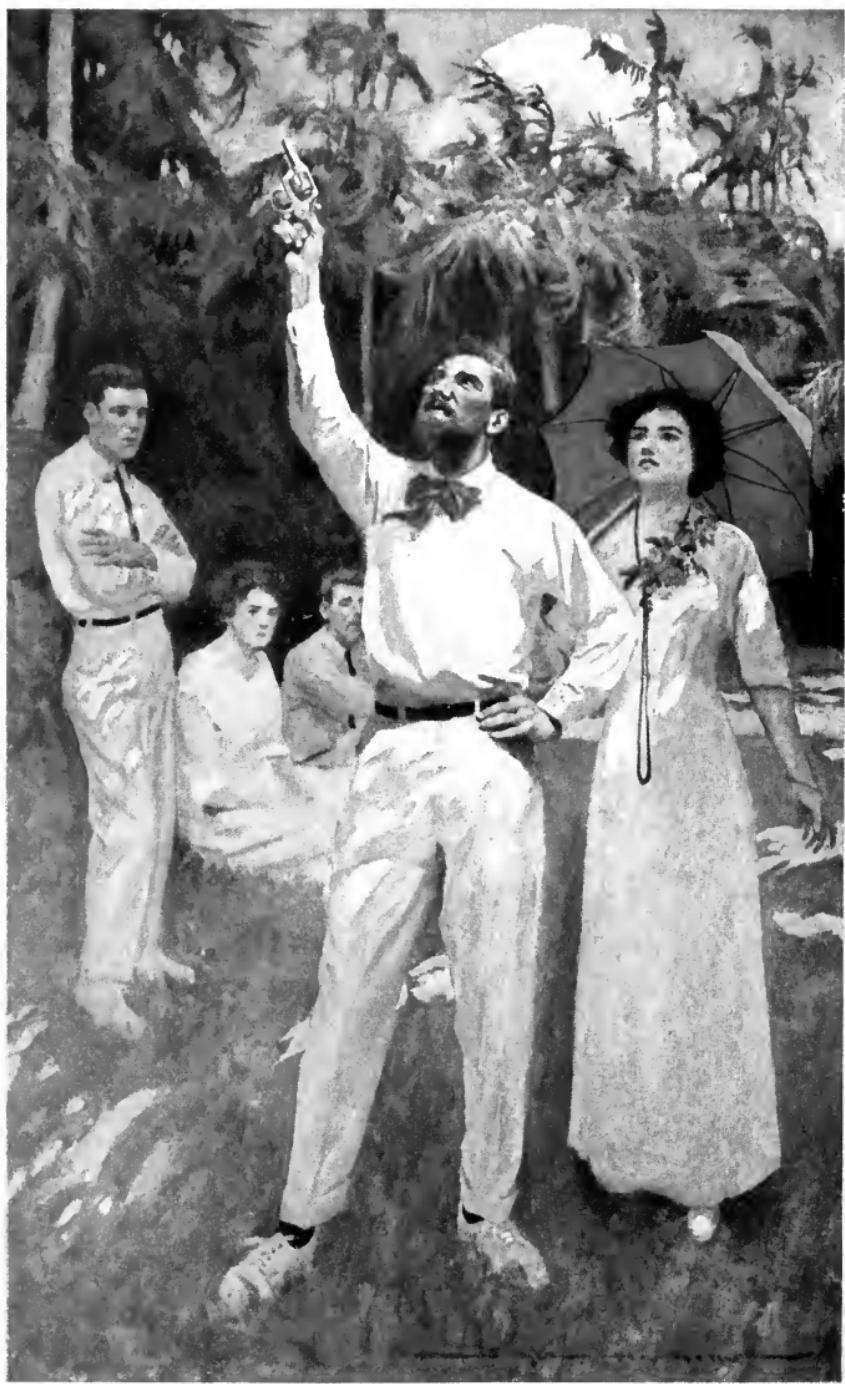
SANTA CRUZ







A JEWEL
OF THE SEAS



"I CAN'T MAKE LOVE WITH AN AUDIENCE, BUT I AM GOING TO MAKE GOOD ON THE REST OF MY BOAST"

A JEWEL OF THE SEAS

BY
JESSIE KAUFMAN

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOR BY
GAYLE PORTER HOSKINS



PHILADELPHIA & LONDON
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To
A. H.

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
AND TO
“SANS SOUCI,”
THE PLACE SHE LOVED

ILLUSTRATIONS

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A JEWEL OF THE SEAS

I.

“Is she pretty—this wonderful Mrs. Chandler?” asked Mrs. Kapua, her dark face aglow with interest.

“I dropped my anchor by her at the hotel hop,” said Teddy Skelton, a midshipman on the *California*. “She’s all my fancy painted her.”

“You must have a vivid imagination,” said Mrs. Kapua. “They say she lays it on heavy.”

“A complexion is so unusual in Hawaii, it makes us suspicious,” I interposed in mild defence of Mrs. Chandler.

“We are apt to think it’s too good to be true,” assented Frank.

“Have some sherbet,” I said, and there was a momentary diversion while Tumi passed the ice.

I really did not think it fair to settle Mrs. Chandler’s complexion so completely and I hastened to change the conversation.

“It is very discouraging to be told that it is pure madness to try a lawn party in Honolulu and run the risk of rain. Mrs. Thornton says I deserve a shower, at least, for my temerity.”

“‘Never mind the weather, love,’” Teddy Skelton said, with more sincerity than originality.

“How personal you are!” I murmured, and I met Frank’s eye instead of Teddy’s; I suppose because I tried hard not to. “The Chandlers and the yacht are going to stay here for quite a while, I hear,” I began hastily.

“Well, Mrs. Chandler must be pretty eh, but somehow a pink and white skin does not suit our climate,” Mrs. Kapua has been told that she is just dark enough to be warm looking. “It is nearly six. I must go,” she added. “Your day at home is always so pleasant. Are you coming my way, Teddy?”

Teddy was. The navy generally went Mrs. Kapua’s way. She stepped into her carriage with a grace all her own, and a generous glimpse of lace fluff and open-work stockings.

“*Aloha*,” she called back as they drove off.

“*Aloha*,” echoed Teddy Skelton. He had almost caught the inflection. It was time to learn who was responsible.

As Tumi came in with her tray to take away the empty sherbet glasses, Frank helped himself to another piece of cake and told her it was “plenty good.”

Tumi’s satisfaction was unmistakable. “Very much thank you,” she said, with her best Japanese bow.

Tumi always insisted upon making the cake

herself, declaring that the cook's was not good enough, being "all same *pa-ke*." *Pa-ke* being Hawaiian for Chinese, this insult relegated the cake to mere dough.

"This kind only simple life kind," Tumi modestly disclaimed. "Put icing on top more better."

Frank assured her that it could not be improved upon, and again saying: "Very much thank you," she went off down the *lanai* steps, stopping at the bottom to put on the sandals she always left outside.

Frank sat down on the railing near my chair, seemingly lost in thought as he gazed at the mountains in the distance, delicately colored as the sun bathed them in the pink glow of the late afternoon. The warm air blew softly in to us, faintly sweet with the perfume of the stephanotis vine that grew up the trellis.

"Do you think Hawaii will ever stop welcoming the stranger?" asked Frank slowly, at last, evidently not voicing his thoughts. "The key note of life in the Islands is hospitality, born in the past, when mails and visitors were rare. But to-day our indiscriminate hospitality is only a bad habit."

I heaved a sigh. "Half the charm of the Islands is gone," I protested. "We have only the climate and our hospitality left."

"Well, when is your garden party for the Chandlers?" asked Frank.

"It's true," I resumed irrelevantly, "her eyebrows seem blackened, but of course they may have been white, and so—you see——"

"Of course, of course," Frank agreed. "Woman, lovely woman, may have a prejudice against the artificial, but white eyebrows will conquer the most bigoted."

"Mrs. Thornton is going to give them a breakfast, Mrs. Elkins a dinner——"

"The same old routine; you needn't go on. And as for the menus, Mrs. Thornton will have cold fish with mayonnaise sauce, Mrs. Elkins will have canned oyster soup with the oysters calculated, five to guests, three to the family——"

"And they say that a woman's mind runs to small details!" I exclaimed.

Frank laughed. "It does the bear good to growl," he said. "This growl is all sugar, any way——"

"It sounds sweet," I interposed.

"With one plantation after another shutting down its dividends, I must say the outlook is bad. Lawyers don't make money in times of financial depression; at least, young lawyers don't. The lucky chap who will be retained by Mr. Thornton, in the case of Aloha Plantation against Leiilima for the right of water for irrigation from Cacao Creek, will have enough to float him for a year, besides a small fortune for a fee at the end. But the fellow who is lucky enough to get that case will be a man

who has made his mark and his pile. Well, the rest of us are in the same boat, but we can't all sail along until sugar goes up and a safe harbor is in sight. Some of us will be swamped."

Frank and I have been friends always. This means much in Hawaii, where we grow up together and have little chance later to drift apart. I stretched out my hand and drew it back. Frank was gazing gloomily at the floor and did not see the gesture. A man claps his chum on the back and says heartily, "Cheer up, old fellow!" Why can't a girl indulge in the more feminine method of slipping her hand sympathetically into a man's, and saying twice as much to the same effect? Why on earth did I hesitate? It was impossible now to be natural or spontaneous. Mrs. Thornton's remark this morning when I was going out her gate was running through my mind:

"Remember, young lady, Hawaii does not believe in platonic friendship."

But Mrs. Thornton, in the face of evidence, would have to believe in platonic friendship. If Frank—but of course if it had been impossible in the past, if financial reasons had been the cause, it was doubly impossible now; or he would think so.

"I'm sorry," I murmured tritely.

"Thank you." Frank spoke with a degree of intensity warmer than my simple words seemed to call for.

"To go back to your lawn party," he resumed

abruptly, "I don't want you to misunderstand me; hospitality is without doubt one of the charms of the Islands, and of course the Chandlers are all right—my remarks were not apropos of them—but this round of entertainments for strangers does become monotonous when one isn't in the mood."

"Oh, yes, I know," I said somewhat impatiently. I had lost interest in the lawn party.

"Wh-o-o-o! Wh-o-o-o!" called a voice from the garden walk.

"Wh-o-o-o! Wh-o-o-o!" I answered back.

"Anybody at home?" asked Mrs. Thornton.

"Very much at home, thanks," Frank replied, running down the steps to greet her.

Mrs. Thornton came into the *lanai* with him, laughing and talking. She looked handsome with her fair coloring set off by a becoming black hat, her blue eyes alight as though she had been having a good time and the recollection still lingered.

"Here's your chaperone," she said to me. "Your father said I was to divide the honors with old Tumi while he was away, you know."

"All right, I'll be good," I said. "Sit down and tell us all about the Chandlers."

"Well, I'm going to have a breakfast for them Sunday at one; you'll both come, won't you? I counted on you of course." Mrs. Thornton took out a memorandum pad. "I'll add you to my list. Everything on board is perfect, just perfect, isn't it? They call her 'Jewel of the Seas,' did you

know? I told them that Honolulu was our Jewel of the Seas, and we had the name first. The Commodore was very polite and he said the *Gelda* considered it an honor to be second."

"What makes him a Commodore?" asked Frank.

"He's Commodore of the Atlantic Yacht Club, he told me; the *Gelda* flies the flag of the Club. Did you meet the Doctor? They spoke of him, but he was on shore. And isn't the Captain a picture? We wrote in the guest book and saw the curios from every part of the world, and the steam laundry,—my, isn't it all luxurious!"

"What wealth it must take to run a yacht like that!" I said.

"I should think so; money must flow just as the champagne does," said Mrs. Thornton. "I never saw anything like it; every time any one called, they opened two bottles at once."

"Trying to make a good impression at the start perhaps," said Frank.

"Oh, is he not jealous!" Mrs. Thornton exclaimed. "By the way, what day is the lawn party? Thursday? I wonder if she is made up; very artistic if she is; you really couldn't be sure; I don't even know why I suspect her."

As Mrs. Thornton paused, Frank took up his hat.

"Wait a moment and I'll walk along with you, Frank. I only stopped in to ask about the lawn

party. I'll get my cook to make some cake and send it over."

"Oh, thank you," I said. "Tumi thinks store cake is such a disgrace that I wouldn't dare have any that is not home-made. She's going to be a very stern chaperone."

"That's good," said Mrs. Thornton cheerfully.

II.

THE arrival of the *Gelda*, the largest, finest and speediest yacht that had ever anchored in our harbor, had awakened no small amount of interest in Honolulu. From one side of the Island to the other and in all circles of society, there was little else talked of. Every one wanted to see the *Gelda*, from the crews and officers of the ships, who were enthusiastic over her good points, to the landsmen, not to speak of the landswomen, who perhaps were more interested in the good points of her owners.

The Commodore had become well known and popular in an incredibly short while. He spent money freely, had a cordial and friendly manner with every one, high and low, and had learned to say: “*Aloha*” to the Hawaiians, instead of passing them with the stare of curiosity, too usual to the tourist. As his launch approached the dock, the native boat boys began to grin and to cluster about, in a manner that testified to satisfactory tips, and farther along he was besieged by the *lei* sellers of both sexes.

The greeting that the Commodore received on the wharf was only a forerunner of what he was to find wherever he went. The shop keepers all knew him and if he had not yet patronized each one of them, he had at least shown an interest in their wares, flattering from such a traveller as he and holding out every encouragement for future pur-

chases. At the Club, he was welcomed even by the more conservative members, who were apt to hold back until the newcomer had proved himself really desirable.

Mrs. Chandler was not so easy to get acquainted with. Although those of us who had called on her had found her a gracious hostess, still there was an element of reserve about her.

It would have taken us a long time, I suppose, to learn as much as we knew about the Chandlers, but our local newspapers were full of the wonders of the "Millionaire's Yacht," renowned throughout the yachting world, the Commodore's purchase of her, and the circumstances which had led to his becoming Commodore of the Atlantic Yacht Club. I was more interested in the personal paragraphs about the Chandlers. One of them stated that the much written-up society wedding of this favored scion of an aristocratic and wealthy New York family, which had filled the papers some years ago, would no doubt be recalled with this visit of John Delafield Chandler and his wife, to our shores.

I telephoned to Mrs. Thornton as soon as I had read this, but although John Delafield Chandler was a familiar name to her, she could not remember any of the details of the wedding.

I knew that every one I had invited would be sure to come to my tea. I felt almost as important

as my distinguished guests and I must have asked Tumi a dozen times if she was sure there would be enough cake.

The afternoon did not seem to take a start until the Chandlers arrived, although the lawn looked festive with groups of people scattered about, the women in gowns of transparent summer texture, the men in white duck, and every one decorated with *leis*. It is remarkable what an addition are these floral wreaths of Hawaii to the festive aspect of our entertainments.

Mrs. Thornton had sent Suki, her maid, over to help. She made a quaint little picture in her *kimono*, and gay *obi*, as she stood at the end of the lawn with a basket of bright carnation *leis* which she tied around the neck of each new arrival.

The tea table was under an old *hau* tree, the pride of the Beach, a huge umbrella of interlacing boughs covered with big, green leaves. The heavy branches, supported by posts, droop towards the sea, shutting off the afternoon glare, never more brilliant than at this time of day when the sun shines aslant the waters, and thousands on thousands of tiny pin-head scintillations are twinkling in dazzling reflection. A little breeze, with a hint of sea-weed pungency to show from where it blew, rose, and died as though discouraged when met by the refreshing trade wind that crept over the mountains and rustled through the fronds of the palms.

There was a perceptible lull in the hum of conversation as Commodore and Mrs. Chandler alighted from their carriage and walked slowly across the lawn. The woman newcomer generally has subtle touches of toilet that are novel to the resident of Hawaii, and this was more than usually apparent to me as I went forward to meet them.

“Oh, this beautiful *lei!*” cried Mrs. Chandler, while the Commodore bent over my hand, murmuring graceful sentences. “I shall never be without one while I’m in the Islands!”

It was becoming. The pink flowers were almost the color of her cheeks, and the deeper tint of her lips, the grey of her eyes and the transparent pale blue and cream of a gown that was simple, but French simple, as every woman would recognize at a glance, toned in with an effect which her big white picture hat completed. Mrs. Chandler was pretty, but above all, she aroused attention through an intangible air that promised something in reserve.

“I wonder if she has lived all she looks, or if she lives to look as if she had,” Frank whispered in my ear, as Mrs. Thornton claimed the attention of the Commodore and his wife.

“If she is made up, it is wonderfully done,” I returned, in a tone as careful. “I don’t believe she can be.”

“Mrs. Chandler wants you to come on the *Gelda* to-morrow to tea,” said the Commodore, turn-

ing to Frank and me. "About five o'clock. The launch will be at the wharf to meet you."

We thanked the Commodore and assured him that we were delighted to accept the invitation and would look forward to a pleasant afternoon on the *Gelda*.

The Commodore was overjoyed by our acceptance and assured us, in return, that the hospitality of the *Gelda* could be but a feeble attempt in comparison with the hospitality in general of Hawaii, and the present function in particular. He did not stop here, but continued with a regular panegyric on our wonderful seashore with its beautiful homes only five miles from the heart of Honolulu, our out-door life on the idealized veranda we called the *lanai*, our moonlight, our land of trade winds and sunshine.

It was now time for us to say something, but in my mind was nothing except the thought of what that something could be. This seemed to freeze all other thoughts—though a thaw would be more likely in the tropics.

Of course what Frank was thinking, I could not tell, but as he says: "A woman's idea of conversation is to talk; a man often thinks a pause is speaking."

I looked up at Commodore Chandler, and he looked down at me. He was very tall; a man of fine physique, good-looking, with clear cut features, dark hair slightly tinged with gray, and handsome eyes that met yours boldly, squarely, even to a suggestion

of defiance. And my eyes fell beneath his direct glance, while I reflected that he must have acquired it through steering the *Gelda* to port after port around the world.

"I see you allow smoking," said the Commodore. He took from his pocket a curious silver case, and, after offering Frank a cigarette, lit one himself.

"What a beauty!" I exclaimed.

"It is very rare," assented the Commodore. "It was given to me by a Russian prince, a diplomat in Japan. When you come on board to-morrow I'll show you some of our curios. In Samoa I found a few that I treasure very highly."

"Samoa was your last port?"

"Yes; the *Gelda* has seen about every country on the map now, but I am disappointed in my trip. I was disappointed at the start and I haven't got over it. My plan before I left New York was to organize an expedition to explore unknown rivers and unvisited countries. I had arranged to carry with me a company of writers, scientists, and photographers, who were to furnish descriptive articles to a syndicate of publishers. Everything was arranged when Mrs. Chandler's health demanded a prolonged sea trip, and I gave the whole thing up. I must say I feel repaid." And the Commodore gazed appreciatively at his pretty wife.

"Is Mrs. Chandler quite well again?" I politely questioned.

"Are you talking about me?" Mrs. Chandler asked. "My health? Oh, I never was sick a day in my life."

"Dear little optimist!" murmured the Commodore.

"Let me introduce you to Mrs. Kapua," I proposed, as I saw her in the distance. "Would you mind walking across to the tea table with me? She is over there."

"Mrs. Kapua?" The Commodore's tone was interested.

"Kapua——" said the Commodore's wife. "What an odd name!"

"Ka—pua means 'The Flower,'" I explained. "We always like to have every one meet Mrs. Kapua, she is so unusual. She has just enough Hawaiian in her to give her the attraction that the rest of us lack."

"Oh, really?" Mrs. Chandler was beginning to be interested too.

Mrs. Kapua looked particularly dashing in a lacy, white gown with a big hat that drooped on one side and flared back from her luxuriant hair with a picturesque sweep. Falling from her shoulders, almost to the hem of her skirt, she wore a *lei* of red carnations strung, with their petals loosened, into a thick rope of color. With her dark hair, her dark, warmly-tinted skin, with her upturned mouth parted in a smile that showed a glimpse of her exquisite

teeth, faultlessly white and even, with her tall, graceful figure, she could not fail to produce an impression.

She greeted the Chandlers with her pretty graciousness of manner.

“We are so glad to have your yacht nestling like a little white bird in our harbor,” she said. “Hawaii is always hospitable eh, but her heart really belongs to the sailor, you know.”

Mrs. Kapua’s glance went from Mrs. Chandler to the Commodore and rested there. And, in appreciation of the metaphor, I lost sight of just where the nestling came in. But the nestling in Hawaii is not apt to be metaphorical.

I introduced Mrs. Chandler to Guy Selby, who was hovering near us, waiting for a word with me, and then to one after another of the *California* officers, as they came along.

Mrs. Chandler sized each one up with a quick look before she spoke. Perhaps she didn’t intend to risk the renewal of some former acquaintance well dropped. Anyway, she looked ready to turn her back at any moment, if advisable.

I felt that the duties of a hostess were trying as I saw Mrs. Thornton and Frank talking together. The Chandlers would be thoroughly discussed before I could rejoin them. But I smiled bravely and held to my post.

“It’s nice to be so attractive,” I said to Frank, later, when I had a breathing spell.

"It is indeed," assented Frank, with undisguised sincerity.

"I mean Mrs. Chandler," I explained, half laughing.

"Of course," said Frank calmly.

"Well, I call that small."

"I call it agreeing."

"I don't think she's anything at all but a snob," I resumed petulantly. "She's mentioned half of New York's four hundred; and when Mrs. Kapua asked her if she had met a Lieutenant Sayers in Tampa she replied, 'Oh, we only met generals!'"

Frank laughed as heartily as though every plantation in the Islands had declared a dividend.

"I'll come around to-night," he said hurriedly, as Commodore Chandler started in our direction with the evident intention of joining us, "and hear the rest," he added.

And I recalled a remark Frank had once made:

"When a man is fertile in reasons for calling on a girl he's interested, but when he ceases to explain he's in love."

I really didn't need the explanation either.

III.

FRANK had not seemed very enthusiastic about going on the *Gelda* and he intimated plainly that if it were not for me, no afternoon tea would ever see him. As this compliment was distinct, I had put on the gown I knew he liked the best of all.

After I joined him on the *lanai* and had been with him fully five minutes, he was still gazing at me. I decided to get another soft, creamy gown, made just the same way. Suki had handed me my gloves and assured me I was: "Too-o-o—much pretty." I couldn't help wondering what Frank was going to say.

It did seem superfluous when he started by asking me if I was ready. Perhaps the jailer who unlocks the murderer's cell, preparatory to escorting him to the gallows, employs much the same tone; it sounded inevitable.

I laughed and sat down in the hammock.

"Have all the laborers on all the plantations gone on a strike,—or is it just the tea?" I asked.

This made him smile—faintly—and he hastened to assure me that something bright and wonderful had come into his life. These were strong words for a man to employ in a voice replete with gloom.

The bright and wonderful happening was soon unfolded to me. Frank had been offered a position in Japan to sell a new kind of cash register for a firm with a big money backing. He was to have a

chance to buy shares, besides receiving a good salary, having all his expenses paid and a percentage on the sales.

I said nothing and, after a moment Frank went on to tell me how dead sick he was of the bluff he was putting up. His rent, his stenographer, his telephone, in fact his office expenses altogether, were beyond anything he had made in months, or ever hoped to make again; he was steadily going behind hand.

“And you are actually thinking seriously of throwing your education to the winds,” I broke in, “of giving up your practice——”

“Practice!” muttered Frank. “I have none. The few clients I have will settle up some day, when sugar goes up maybe, but in the meantime, what? The lawyer and the doctor are always paid last, and I can’t wait. If I go away and make some money, I will be another man; I’ll be free, free to go ahead—and then,—and then——”

I waited. Perhaps Frank thought his inflection could not be misunderstood; perhaps the look that accompanied it was all he considered permissible to a limited income. He was silent.

“And then,” I said, with an icy calm, “and then you will do just exactly what other men have planned to do before you; you will return to Honolulu.”

“Yes,” said Frank eagerly, with his eyes on me.

“And you will find that Honolulu has not

waited for you. Another man will have taken your place—your office I mean, of course.”

“Do you mean that?” asked Frank. “Do you really mean that I would be out of sight, out of mind?”

“I do,” I answered firmly. “The man who leaves his work at home and goes off to float lazily into a get-rich-quick scheme has no stability; business men fight shy of him; he is just the sort of man to be satisfied with a toddling doll in a pretty *kimono*. He might return to his home, but never would he find a right-minded girl waiting for him. Never again would his clients take their cases to him. His chance would be gone.”

Judging from Frank’s expression, he was trying to get his business and heart interests disentangled, and I was glad when Tumi came in to remind us that we were due at the wharf at five o’clock. Here we were, enjoying the view of sea and beach at Waikiki as unconcernedly as though half an hour’s drive was not before us.

“More better you go *wiki wiki*,” (quick) said Tumi, pointing to the clock, for Tumi shared the curiosity of every one in Honolulu in the distinguished strangers and would be sure to ask me all sorts of interested questions about them, when I got home.

The *Gelda* was lying a bit off in “Naval Row,” a strong contrast to the formidable *California* looming up beyond like a huge, threatening power ever

on watch, ever ready to defend, ever concerned with the serious affairs of life, while the little yacht that existed only to dance on the ocean wave, flaunted her gaily colored lanterns, and her bright awnings, and her snowy paint, and her dainty, small boats in the face of her uncompromising neighbor.

We were met at the wharf by the *Gelda*'s launch, flying the Atlantic Yacht Club flag and manned by sailors in spotless white and blue suits, with *Gelda* cap ribbons. The Captain stood, a picturesque figure in duck uniform, waiting to help us up the ladder.

The Commodore greeted us with heartiness.

“The ship’s yours,” he declared gallantly to me, as we walked along to where Mrs. Chandler was waiting to receive us.

This sounded so whole-souled and spontaneous that I felt as if I were in danger of having my head turned, but it seemed to sound just as well when I overheard the Commodore whisper it to Mrs. Kapua.

The deck was delightfully cool and shady, with its awnings brought just low enough to protect one from the glare, but open sufficiently to admit the refreshing breeze that swept across the waters. All sorts of comfortable steamer chairs with every variety of softly tinted, silken cushions, convenient tables, interesting looking books and magazines, artistic vases filled with flowers, odd-looking ash trays, handsome cigarette and cigar boxes, bonbon-

nières, and an exquisite tea service, added to the general air of luxury and good taste that pervaded the deck of the *Gelda*. It was an ideal lounging spot, a place to rest, and dream, and wile away the hours in a quiet ease, unknown in the busy whirl of life on shore, even in the tropics.

We were shown all over the yacht and found her a miniature floating palace. The men said she was a: "Neat little craft," and the women said they would be willing to risk sea sickness when they saw her darling cabins with broad brass beds instead of the usual narrow bunks, convenient dressing rooms, and bath rooms shining with white tiles and silver fittings, polished as if fresh from a jeweller's hands. In Mrs. Chandler's bath room the water flowed from the bills of gracefully moulded, golden swans, that formed the faucets. The Captain's quarters included a pretty dining room and a library. The Captain himself was a blonde six-footer with the immaculate appearance of a naval officer on duty.

We came out on deck, at last, to tea. This beverage proved to be, for the most part, champagne, and Mrs. Thornton had not exaggerated when she said it flowed.

While we were drinking it and eating delicious sandwiches of real Russian caviare, sent by the Czar when the *Gelda* was in Russia, Mrs. Chandler showed us her photographs of princes she had known in the different countries where the *Gelda*

had anchored. I was particularly interested, as I was making a collection of photographs myself—though I did not confine myself to royalty. Last, but of course not least, was our own Prince Maluna. I quite lost my heart to one of them, a broad-shouldered, athletic man with an air that was dashing,—rakish, perhaps—and a hint of melancholy in his eyes.

“He looks so familiar,” I said to Frank.

I turned the picture over to see if the photographer’s address would give a clue to the prince’s nationality. Across the back was scrawled, “*Tout à toi, chérie.*” As I looked up, I caught Mrs. Chandler’s eye, and I flushed in a loneliness unshared by my hostess, though I did not quite see why the flush wasn’t all hers. But as Frank says: “The tree may be known by its fruit, but a woman can’t be read by her complexion.”

A few moments later Mrs. Chandler gathered up her photographs. She hurriedly glanced through them.

“I don’t see how this picture got among the lot,” she said to me, as she picked it out. “This man is Prince Otto; he was engaged to Princess Stephanie, a dear girl and one of my best friends. She died of Roman fever and left her lover’s picture to me.”

I expressed sympathy for the princess. “What became of Prince Otto?” I asked interestedly.

“He came to America incognito, in search of

diversion. He did a lot of crazy and eccentric things, and was finally killed in an aeroplane ascension. You've seen his picture before, no doubt."

"I did think his face familiar."

"Oh, yes, poor fellow, his history is so sad. I'll tell you more about him some day."

The Commodore was filling Mrs. Kapua's glass with champagne. Her dark eyes were raised to his; this was only natural as she had been told so often that they were unfathomable, but it was not wise, for the Commodore in trying to read them, forgot that the bottle held more than the glass possibly could. Mrs. Kapua only smiled, her own dazzling smile, when it overflowed, and said it did not matter as she was wearing only a tub gown.

But it would have been just the same if the gown had been brocade. Part of Mrs. Kapua's charm is her unchanging serenity. The Commodore, with a laughing remark to the effect that he must prove himself a more competent butler, passed on with the bottle and it was true that he did not linger so long again.

"You must have met some very interesting people in your travels, Mrs. Chandler," said Mr. Mitchell, leaving a group of men and joining us.

Mr. Mitchell has done a lot of travelling himself. Being a United States official and fully alive to the social importance of his post, he and his wife, who is a hospitable, kindly woman, have made quite a place for themselves amongst us, during the few years they have been in Honolulu. Mr. Mitchell is

well liked, in spite of a weakness for talking about the prominent people he has met. If he has occasion to speak of royalty, he lowers his voice respectfully and one does not have to be very astute to surmise that he is one of those who love a title.

"Yes, we have been fortunate," replied Mrs. Chandler. "I think the *Gelda* has entertained most of the crowned heads of Europe, besides noted people in all parts of the world. Of course the *Gelda* is a drawing card; she's considered one of the finest yachts of the Eastern Fleet, you know."

"She's a beauty!" Mr. Mitchell spoke enthusiastically. "No doubt we have many mutual friends in Washington," he added. "Mrs. Mitchell and myself have just returned from there. You know the Russian Ambassador—and the Minister from France? Yes? Charming fellows. Mrs. Mitchell and I gave ourselves up entirely to society. Last time we went on, Mrs. Mitchell was in mourning, and we saw nothing of the social life, of course. I said to the President one day, 'Honolulu is gay, but we couldn't stand this pace in the tropics.' And the President said, 'Tell me, Mitchell, my boy, why it is that in that seemingly peaceful spot you have this continual political strife.' And I said to him, 'Mr. President, since you ask my views'—and then I gave him frankly a synopsis of the situation. When I got through the President said, 'Mitchell, this is the first clear explanation I have had of Hawaiian affairs.' I replied, 'Thank you, Mr. President;' and I felt that he wanted to thank

me. The truth was that the other fellows stood in awe of him, and, remembering always that he was the President of the United States, they simply could not talk freely. It wasn't that I understood politics here any better than they."

"One must be thrown with those high in authority before one can realize how they unbend," rejoined Mrs. Chandler. "I must tell you an incident that happened when we were in London. One day we went to the races. As we arrived, a gentleman who drove up about the same time, alighted from his carriage on the outskirts of the crowd, and as he saw us he inclined his head. The Commodore bowed and so did I. Although we could not recall having met him, his face was not entirely strange, and he seemed to know us.

"'We're all betting on Juanita to-day,' said the Commodore, who is an ideal traveller, any way, being hail-fellow-well-met with every one. The gentleman bowed politely, but said nothing. The Commodore then offered to bet with him, adding with a laugh, 'My wife will make a record of the bet.'

"I wore a chateleine hanging at my side, to which was attached a tiny note-book. The whole thing was of rare and curious design and was given to me by the Empress of China. The gentleman remarked upon its beauty as I opened the book, and I told him something of its history.

"'What name shall I put?' I asked.

"'Oh, write me down as the Prince of Wales!' cried the Commodore.

“‘Well, call me just Tummy,’ said the gentleman. ‘Tummy,’ of course, was the pet name of the Prince of Wales, familiar to his intimates.

“We laughed and the bet was recorded. ‘Tummy’ lost. In a few days the Commodore received his picture in all the glory of court dress and medals. Across it was written: ‘Tummy, a debtor; Prince of Wales, a friend.’”

“It was the Prince of Wales!” breathed Mr. Mitchell.

It was plain we had found a height that could strike awe to the soul of Mr. Mitchell.

As for myself, I felt that it was time for me to travel and get a crowned head, or something on that order, on my visiting list. I nestled up to Mrs. Thornton a few moments later and asked her who was the most noted person she had ever met; and she said Rudyard Kipling—but they’d never been introduced. This was soothing, for I remembered that I’d met a celebrity or two, in the same manner.

When we were going home I told Frank all about it, he happening to be nearest me.

“It would make any woman long for wealth to go on the *Gelda*,” he said gloomily, and not in the least apropos of my story. “And any man discouraged to think how little he could give the woman he loved!”

But I looked at Frank and knew that I could be content in little Honolulu, the Prince of Wales forgetting and by the Prince forgot.

IV.

IF I ever become a social leader, like Mrs. Thornton, Honolulu shall have a "season" instead of the twelve months a year social activity known to us, and a luncheon in July will be a barbarism of the past. I never could understand why a luncheon was any the less a luncheon, when called a breakfast. Mrs. Thornton gives them on Sundays, when the men can come, and she telephones a casual sounding: "Won't you drop in to breakfast Sunday at one?"

Of course in doing the informal, it is possible for her steward to go the happy-go-lucky way of the Chinese steward, since annexation and the Chinese Exclusion Act have made us his slaves. Mrs. Thornton calls him: "My butler," with a serene indifference to the fact that he is just what the rest of us struggle with and have always called a steward, as they do on the ships that have brought us him, and the mosquitoes and other mixed blessings. In fact, Mrs. Thornton hypnotizes one into an oblivion of the incongruous while confidently talking of "My butler," who may at the time be making mistakes that would shatter the nerves of an ordinary hostess.

As I sat at the table, I felt that it was a simple matter to give breakfasts at midday, with a com-

plexion like Mrs. Thornton's. The white of her skin has defied the tropical sunshine of this "land of perpetual summer," and she has kept her color. The tourist who passes through and writes a book on the Islands, generally speaks of the sun-kissed cheeks of Hawaii, flushed with a rich warmth. But he is blind for the sake of his pen picture. As a matter of fact, the kisses of the sun, the caresses of the salt breeze, have never contributed to beauty.

But although I might occasionally wish things otherwise, there never was any social leader who could be to her native dwelling place what Mrs. Thornton has been to Honolulu. Never tired of keeping "open house," always ready to entertain the stranger, one function seeming to suggest the next and to inspire further effort, with her unlimited wealth, charm of manner, and natural warmth of heart able to be a perfect hostess, she, better than any one else, can keep up the reputation for hospitality of which we have always boasted. Being a traveller herself, she probably knows what it is to be lonely. Frank says she casts her bread upon the waters with a happy faith, and sends her card by way of a searchlight when she arrives in San Francisco, New York and other ports.

Mr. Thornton, although quiet and somewhat reserved, always has a cordial welcome for every one. If he occasionally grows tired of company, no one ever knows it; I don't believe he does himself, for Mr. Thornton adores his wife and everything she

does is admirable in his eyes. If she ever turns his home into a permanent hotel, it will be just the right and proper thing to do.

Not content with the Chandlers alone, Mrs. Thornton had invited another *malihini* (stranger), Mrs. Spotfield, a naval officer's wife who had come to Honolulu to await the arrival of her husband, now in China with his ship.

She was pretty; a fair, small-featured, blue-eyed, curly-haired woman, who looked very young when she was animated, but much older when her face was in repose. About her mouth were lines that showed her reflections had not all been made up of sunshine and flowers. Her figure was that of a mere girl; not thin, but slimly youthful. It was quite clear that she had often been told she was bright. What she lacked in thought, she made up in sprightliness, and her eyes were like stars.

She sat at Mr. Thornton's left hand and she had not sat long before she gave a merry little laugh in the midst of a pause and said:

“Yes, I've taken a cottage back of the hotel and I have started housekeeping. As it is all temporary, I am just playing at it,—picnicking in fact. I have a wooden box for an ice chest and a long nail for an ice pick. And the parlor looks so pretty with *tapas* hung all around and navy ribbons in between. It's not very comfortable just now because there is a big spider crawling on the wall. He's as big as a dinner plate, counting his legs,

and he scares the life out of me, but I've heard that spiders are considered lucky in Hawaii, so I won't have it killed. When the spider is on one side of the room, I take the other. Sometimes it is a trifle inconvenient."

Everybody looked amused, and Mrs. Thornton laughed aloud. Being the hostess, she could do no less, and her laugh has a ripple. This encouraged Mrs. Spotfield to go on. She became quite reckless.

"And it does seem so odd to have one's bedroom open on the front veranda. My door is next to the parlor, and there is no bell. Has any house in Honolulu a bell? And one's steward, of course, is off gambling; so when I'm not to be found in the parlor, man, woman, or child turns to the next door and walks in. And—in the tropics—so I either run out the back door or into a *kimono*—if they are slow enough." Mrs. Spotfield came to a pause with a plaintive note alluringly suggestive of lace and baby ribbons and transparent effects.

Everybody looked still more amused; Mrs. Thornton's laugh rippled one scale higher; and Mrs. Spotfield, with blissful ignorance of Honolulu high life, plunged in where the *kamaaina* (one who belongs to the Islands) fears to tread.

"But what's the difference?" she said blithely. "The white people are all in the same boat; we have become oblivious of the sensibilities of the Chinese and Japanese, and the Hawaiians didn't know fashions—or even a *holoku*—before the mis-

sionary came. It's lucky the missionary did come. The pretty half-white girls dress so well. Do you like the half-whites, Mr. Thornton?"

Mr. Thornton's reply was hasty and mostly suggestive of hot potato half swallowed. Mrs. Spotfield flushed and looked pained. It was clear that somebody had kicked her under the table. For an instant she did not speak, and it became a matter of conjecture whether all her emotions had not concentrated in her shins.

"Oh, you do like them, Mr. Thornton?" she proceeded smoothly. "So do I—they are so fascinating. I'm mixed myself, you know; I think it makes us more vivacious."

And nobody doubted that she was mixed, for, glancing from one to the other of us, she found us fairly fair—if tanned. Opposite her sat Mrs. Elkins, one of whose brothers had married Kealoha Moody. Mrs. Elkins had never pretended to like it, particularly since Kealoha had awakened from the glamour of a foreign marriage and had returned to *poi*, a growing corpulency, and *holokus*.

Next to her was Billy Barker. Being unencumbered, he is in demand among hostesses. Billy came to the Islands, a young fellow without prospects, or a cent, but with an Irish ancestry which, as he said, helped a lot. And he married a Hawaiian heiress with land,—sugar land. She died and left Billy to gladden the hostess heart.

Mr. Elkins sat at Mrs. Thornton's left. He

comes of good, old missionary stock and the Royalist faction never loses a chance to hint that his beautiful Colonial house is quite unlike the rude hut of his grandfather, entirely ignoring the fact that time and sugar have sweetened life's jack-pot for Royalist and missionary alike.

In the ensuing three minutes everybody tried to think what to say and didn't say it. The pause may be a rest, but the awkward pause is not restful.

"I met such a unique princess in San Francisco," said Mrs. Chandler. "She was the daughter of a Chinese Croesus and she said she came from Honolulu. She was dining with some naval people and so were we."

"Perhaps it was Adrienne Singlee," said Mrs. Thornton. "She was in San Francisco about the time you must have been there. All Hawaiians are princesses when they travel; I really think it's a habit with the reporters. But the Singlees are one of our most picturesque families; you must meet them."

Mrs. Thornton took some cards from the tray handed her by one of the servants. "Mr. and Mrs. Starley Wyncoop, New York," she read. "Do you know them, Commodore? No? New York is so big, of course! They must have arrived on the *Maru* this morning. They gave me the most delightful dinner when I was in New York, last winter."

She glanced around her polished *koa* table. It could have held two more without the least crowd-

ing. Her expression almost said, "Move up, and I'll start the menu again!"

Nobody could blame her; even for Mrs. Thornton it was hard to be at dessert of one entertainment and be brought face to face with bouillon for the next. It is never a new sensation in Honolulu, but it is none the less painful.

"George," she said to her husband as she rose from her seat, "have coffee in the *lanai*. I'll ask the Wyncoops to join us."

And as she disappeared we all knew that she would be equal to the situation.

In a few moments we sauntered by twos into the *lanai*, where we were introduced to the Starley Wyncoops. Mrs. Starley was reminiscent of Fifth Avenue even to those of us who had never seen New York. She had black eyes, a skin of creamy pallor, and hair that lay in dusky waves on a very white brow. She was good-looking in a rather severe style, which was contradicted by a wicked curve at one corner of her mouth when she smiled. Her figure testified to a faultless corset, and the perfect lines of her tailor-made jacket were a revelation. She carried a parasol with a striking handle—a beautiful dog's head, with large jewelled eyes. Mr. Wyncoop was a blond boy with blue eyes that just seemed to be hunting for experience; when he looked at his wife a world of awakened intelligence seemed to dawn in them.

Mrs. Thornton went off to see if her butler was

“planting the coffee,” which seemed unaccountably delayed, and I tried to make conversation, which wasn’t easy in the face of a midday glare and the discouragement of New York style.

“It is too bad you can’t wait over and take the next through steamer,” I began.

This being the usual remark of Honolulu to a through passenger, it came without stress of thought.

“We regret it so much,” returned Mrs. Wyncoop. “Next time we come, we are certainly going to arrange it so that we can stop over in this charming place.”

This was the usual reply.

A short pause ensued, broken by the approach of Mrs. Chandler with Billy Barker. Mrs. Wyncoop was gazing around Mrs. Thornton’s spacious, picturesque *lanai*, with its gnarled old tree in one corner, the trunk coming up through the floor and disappearing through the ceiling, where the *lanai* had been built around it; with its hammocks and palms, wicker lounging chairs and odd Chinese lanterns. She turned slowly as I started to introduce Mrs. Chandler.

“Mrs. Chandler,” she repeated with a surprised stare.

“Mrs.—Starley—Wyncoop!” exclaimed Mrs. Chandler, lingering on each name as though each in itself were a new sensation.

“And Mr. Barker,—let me introduce Mr. Bar-

ker," I said, after waiting in vain for the two women to come back to earth—and to us.

This passed unnoticed and Billy, in his usual happy vein, suggested that I melt away with him. But I was too much interested to dissolve entirely and stood near by with Billy, who at once started to pour reminiscences of early and gay days in my ear,—one ear, for the other naturally stayed with Mrs. Chandler and Mrs. Starley Wyncoop.

"Where did you bag the kid?" demanded Mrs. Chandler in a modulated but none the less distinct key.

I thought this was rather hard on Mrs. Wyncoop, but she only laughed as if she had done something to be proud of.

"I was on my way to Europe with the 'Fairy,'" she said. "Starley Wyncoop was going over to meet his yacht in the Mediterranean. Eight days on deck and nearly every one else sea-sick. My chaperone failed to meet me on the other side—he married me in London, and——"

"What do you mean by murmuring 'Yes' in that dangerous way?" Billy Barker whispered softly.

I started; Billy was renowned for his flirtatious proclivities. What on earth had he been saying?

"You've never understood me," I suggested, by way of gaining time.

"Give me a chance," cried Billy. "You can make a student of me."

This was a gallant declaration, for there was little of the student about Billy.

“Tell me that story about Lunalilo and the naval officer,” I interposed. I knew it by heart and Billy, once launched, would be good for a full two minutes any way.

“And you?” began Mrs. Wyncoop. “Learning the *hula hula*? ”

“No, I too have not been idle.” Mrs. Chandler laughed. “Here comes the Commodore; I’ll introduce you. I met him after—— Oh, thanks, Mrs. Thornton; yes, I will have coffee, please. Yes, Mrs. Wyncoop and I are old friends, but we have not seen each other for years. We have both been married since.”

“I tell you Lunalilo was the wise old chap, even if he did sometimes look on the wine when it was red,” wound up Billy.

And I knew it was safe this time to venture: “Yes.”

“Delicious coffee,” said Mrs. Spotfield, moving nearer with her cup in her hand.

She was looking straight at Billy Barker, and there was a soft note in her voice. Her remark sounded almost personal.

“Kona coffee; how could it help being like nectar? So euphonious; what lovely names you have in this country! ”

I murmured: “Billy Barker’s Kona coffee.”

Mrs. Spotfield gave me a glance. If her eyes had not been blue, it might have been sharp.

She laughed. "Doesn't that sound well!" she cried with girlish enthusiasm; "Weren't you in San Francisco, Mr. Barker?" she added. "Of course I know that all Honolulu men go there sooner or later, but I don't hear of them all. I did hear of you, though. I heard,—well, anyway, I knew at once when I met you to-day, that you were the man."

"What did you hear?" asked Billy, with a keen and undisguised interest in the subject of himself.

Many a man before has risen to that fly. Billy was all Mrs. Spotfield's.

I began to have that indescribable and never-to-be-desired feeling of "Third," and I followed Mrs. Thornton, as she crossed the *lanai*.

"Who was Mrs. Starley Wyncoop before she was married?" I asked her.

"Well, my dear, I really don't know exactly," replied Mrs. Thornton. "There's always such a lot of gossip, you know, that one cannot tell what to believe. They say in New York that she was a model for a corset house, and she was sent to Europe by the firm every winter. On one of these trips she met him, and he fell madly in love with her. He is one of the Wyncoops, you know, and has even more millions than the other millionaires. They know every one and go everywhere, anyway."

“And Mrs. Chandler? Who was she, I wonder?”

“Oh, she was a Miss Chalmers; her mother was the daughter of the American minister to Berlin, and her father was naval attaché at the Court of Vienna. Very distinguished family, really. She met Commodore Chandler abroad.”

“How do you know all that?” I asked in some surprise.

“Why, she told me herself,” said Mrs. Thornton.

“Come for a walk, do,” said Frank, as Mrs. Thornton disappeared into her room. “Just to get an appetite for dinner,” he explained to my entire satisfaction,

V.

BILLY BARKER said he was not going to make himself conspicuous and he was going to get right in line and do something for the Chandlers.

Plans for festivities at the beach are apt to arise with the moon and as it was moonlight there was nothing to wait for; so Billy invited us to dinner and named the earliest possible night.

Mr. and Mrs. Thornton had brought Frank and me in their automobile, and we were the first to arrive.

“This is not a ‘Come one, come all’ party; it isn’t that type,” Billy announced, when we re-entered the *lanai* from the dressing room. “My list, with a blue pencil, has been submitted to each guest. The primitive beauty of its every return has been a lesson in brotherly love that I can ne’er forget.”

“Heavens! Who’s asked?” Mrs. Thornton’s tone was faintly alarmed.

“Either you cannot read, your trust in me is sublime,—or I forgot to send you the list. Know then—ah, here is Mrs. Spotfield!”

“What an ideal place you have here, Mr. Barker!” cried Mrs. Spotfield, after greeting each one of us. “Oh, such a moon!”

“Yes, pretty good; I had it fitted and hung before the *lanai* was built,” Mr. Barker began flippantly.

But he met Mrs. Spotfield's blue eyes and his manner changed. Billy never could resist a pretty woman and Mrs. Spotfield certainly was a picture, a white chiffon scarf loosely twisted about her blonde, curly hair, forming a frame for her fair prettiness. A lacy wrap fell half off her shoulders, showing her arms and neck that were almost as white as her gown.

She looked up at Billy and smiled. "It must be like the deck of a ship," she said, with a wave of her hand towards the outer part of the *lanai*, where the roof did not extend, leaving an uncovered portion open to the sky.

It was as clear as day out there, when Billy pressed a button and turned out the electric lights that had dimmed the milder rays of the moon.

"Come and I'll show you."

There was no disputing Billy's manner when he wanted to be gallant and Mrs. Spotfield seemed to appreciate it, as she walked by his side.

We all followed. It was irresistible, the murmured invitation of the surf, the soft restfulness of light, and we stood by the low railing and gazed out over the gently rolling ocean extending everywhere as far as the eye could see, washing up with little splashes against the posts, rippling on the sands somewhere under where we stood, and farther on breaking against the sea wall, with a hint of a mighty power now in abeyance. It certainly was

like the deck of a ship on the *lanai* built over the water, with the waves beneath us and the sky above.

“Just like being at sea, with all the joy of having no motion!” cried Mrs. Spotfield.

“And you a sailor’s wife!” said Billy.

“Oh, but he does the sailing,—and thank goodness for it!”

This, apparently, came straight from Mrs. Spotfield’s heart. Perhaps she believed in the perpetual honeymoon claimed by the navy as an offset to frequent separations, or perhaps she only meant that he was a better sailor than she. Billy was looking at her interestedly, but the tooting of a horn from an arriving automobile reminded him of his duties, and he hastened off.

After all, his list could have been passed around with a blue pencil, for the Chandlers, Mrs. Kapua, and Guy Selby, made up the rest of the party. Billy’s specialty was small dinners and congenial spirits happily brought together.

But, as dinner progressed, it was evident that even congeniality has to be gauged by the successful host. Billy, with Mrs. Chandler of course at his right, and Mrs. Spotfield, the other “visitor to our Isles”—as the Society Column puts it—seated at his left, was torn between the determined efforts of each to claim his undivided attention. When he tried to draw them together, it was like putting a period to the conversation. Then there would come a fresh start from whichever one could get in first.

It was a case of "How happy could I be with either," and Billy seemed to be fast reaching a stage when one eye, and half his mouth, were trying to act entirely independently of the other half of his face.

Mrs. Chandler was not wholly to blame because Guy Selby, who sat between her and me, would insist upon talking to me continually.

"I believe in monopoly—I hope you do," he whispered with the sort of look the novelists describe as dangerous.

If Mrs. Chandler had been inclined to let Mrs. Spotfield have all of our host, she could hardly have done so unless she remained silent. Realizing his hard position, I turned from Guy Selby to Frank as soon as I could, but he coldly remarked:

"Pray do not let me interrupt your conversation with Lieutenant Selby."

The accent was on the Lieutenant, which showed that Frank had in mind the reputed power of the brass button. After that, I had mostly a view of his shoulder as he devoted himself to Mrs. Thornton.

Oh, these congenial dinners!

Mrs. Kapua was really the Star Guest, for she talked to Commodore Chandler and Mr. Thornton with equal impartiality, and threw her glances generously for either to catch. Mrs. Kapua knows when to concentrate, and when not, and if there is a time when she can fascinate two men with one effort, she seldom fails to do so.

Every woman at the table was dressed in white and yet each looked absolutely individual. Mrs. Spotfield, in organdy and lace, the sash around her slender waist of palest blue, was the simple ingénue. Mrs. Chandler wore a soft, diaphanous fabric with the delicate sheen of a pearl. There was a hint of subtle tinting, an elusive suggestion of color somewhere half hidden under the transparencies, and the opals about her neck also changed their pale tints from one exquisite hue to another as she moved. Her hair, with its lovely, reddish lights, had odd combs irregularly fastening its waves. You could see that Mrs. Chandler had been in cities where great actresses vied in creating original, and striking effects.

Poor Billy Barker! How could he manage two women, each trying to manage him, and each so attractive, and be an impartial host as well?

Mrs. Kapua's white chiffon set off her glowing brunette beauty to such an extent that one quite forgot the gown. On her dark hair was a *lei* of red carnations, worn as only Mrs. Kapua, with an ancestry accustomed to the adornment of floral wreaths, could wear it. A gorgeous ruby pendant surrounded with diamonds, her favorite ornament, fell from her beautifully moulded neck. It is Mrs. Kapua's usual style of dressing, for she knows she has struck a note that is the true one for her.

Mrs. Thornton is always dressed conventionally

and with taste. Her gowns are imported, and chosen with a discrimination possible to an unlimited income.

“Isn’t it odd that five women in five white gowns can manage to look so different from each other?” I asked Guy.

“You’re the only one that is different!” Guy whispered, with some intensity.

There happened to be a lull in the conversation just then and I glanced at Frank. And I hoped he had overheard, for he looked as if he’d swallowed all the knives, instead of only alligator pear.

“Oh, by the way, Commodore,” began Billy Barker, “you ought to be an expert as regards fish,—having been in Japan so much, you know,—what do you think of our *kumu*? ”

There was a short pause, while every one’s mind reverted to fish; it showed the desperate stage Billy had reached, for his was ordinarily a versatile mind and the fish course, long passed, had been devilled crabs anyway.

But the conversation became general, for the Commodore said so many pretty things about the fish of Hawaii, their delicacy of flavor, their variety, and last but not least, their exquisite and wondrous coloring, that we all found ourselves asking him if he’d seen this one, so like a butterfly, or that one, an imprisoned rainbow,—it was almost as though we had shares in the Aquarium. I found myself wish-

ing that Frank had all his money in it when Mrs. Kapua put her hand on the Commodore's arm and looked up at him with her lustrous eyes.

“They are like jewels eh.” she said. Who could resist the Aquarium!

Mrs. Kapua's “Eh” is a note of velvet inflection. It is not a demand, it requires no answer. It invites confidence and is, in turn, confiding. It caresses, or soothes, or flatters, or cajoles, as the case may be, but always it is a concession. A statement is tempered by it, a remark qualified. And none but a Hawaiian could strike the musical range of that one soft, little melodious “Eh.”

“Talking of jewels,” said the Commodore, “I have a real fish story to tell you. When we were in Japan, Mrs. Chandler and I were invited to dine with the Emperor. As the fish was brought in, I noticed that it was pale as to complexion and I wondered if our courage would be equal to the task of politeness before us.

The fish was a huge one and it was placed on the table in front of the Emperor; a tall Chinaman leaned over and with a great flourish, he poured right in the centre of its eye, a drop of a fiery looking liquid. With a convulsive movement, the unfortunate fish dropped into eight pieces, four on each side of its vertebræ. The Emperor rose and taking a gorgeous emerald from its hiding place, somewhere near the head, he presented it to Mrs. Chandler. I believe she almost forgot the cruelty

of a dissection so complete and still so skilful, that no vital point had been touched."

"The poor fish eh," murmured Mrs. Kapua.

"But you see, the honor of a great Tabasco Sauce Finale before the Emperor was probably his consolation," rejoined the Commodore. "Oh, those Japs are wonders, I tell you, and generous,—phew! Mrs. Chandler must show you some of the rare stones given her by the Emperor."

"Oh, I'd like to see them! I must say I have a weakness for jewelry," said Mrs. Thornton, "I love the sparkle, and the lustre, and the colors; precious stones are full of romance to me. But I believe Mr. Thornton looks upon them only as an investment."

She pouted and then blushed, as she caught Mr. Thornton's eye. For he looked as though she were the only investment in the world to him.

"What are your favorite stones, Mrs. Thornton?" asked the Commodore. "I hear you have some fine diamonds."

It was soon evident that the Commodore's pet fad was under discussion, for he seemed to forget even Mrs. Kapua in the interest of his subject. The conversation was no longer a general one and Billy Barker sat back. Mrs. Spotfield, without a shadow of delay, leaned toward him, but before she could speak, Mrs. Chandler quickly interposed.

"What a good cook you have, Mr. Barker; is he Chinese?" she asked.

Ah Quon had been with his master for years, and Billy told many anecdotes about him that were new to Mrs. Chandler and each more amusing than the last. She was a good listener.

Mrs. Spotfield's smile faded, and so did she. It was a psychological study, what Mrs. Spotfield's smile did for her. Without it, she was years older.

But dinner was over and we followed our host outside, where coffee was served. One did not have to make conversation at Waikiki. The ever-changing wonders of ocean and sky provided an entertainment that could never grow old. We sat about on the railing of the *lanai*, or lounged in the comfortable wicker chairs and were silent, except for a desultory remark or two that seemed to die half spoken.

I looked at Mrs. Chandler and wondered what memories she was recalling with that half smile; and from her I glanced toward the Commodore. He was standing, his head thrown back as though to drink in the ocean smells, the sea-weed and the salt that sailors love. And he looked the sailor, his fine figure alert, on watch, defiant, as though ready to battle with the mighty elements. His attitude hardly suited the ocean's gentle mood, its restless waters shimmering softly, with an occasional lazy roll when the little breezes rose to play over the surface.

Mrs. Chandler put down her cup on the railing. "How did you dare have your house built right

out over the water like this, Mr. Barker? Aren't you afraid of being swept out to sea when a storm comes up? Do tell me about the foundations of your bungalow."

"Would you like to see how it is built?" cried Mr. Barker in eager response.

This was really his weak point. Perhaps Mrs. Chandler had guessed that practically the whole cost, and the whole plan, of the bungalow was centred in its stone props.

Mrs. Chandler rose and picked up her skirts with a graceful motion, as though she were just going to step into a dance revealing a pretty foot in a coquettish French slipper.

"Indeed I should like it; I always want to understand the foundations," she cried.

And certainly, whether by accident or by design, she had got to the foundation with Mr. Barker. Judging by Mrs. Spotfield's expression, she thought it was by design.

"How pretty Mrs. Chandler is," she said to me. "It's too bad that hair with Titian tints is never natural, or rather it is too bad that men don't like artifice."

But Commodore Chandler interrupted any further confidences about his wife by coming forward to take Mrs. Spotfield's empty cup. I would have liked to hear what more she had to say, but the Commodore devoted himself to us and there was no chance. I wondered once, or twice, if she was cal-

culating the length of time it took to see a cellar, but as she smiled at the Commodore, the thought was dispelled.

“Hello there!” called Billy from the sea wall, at last. “Pitch us a cigarette. Thanks, good throw, it hit that first wave—never mind, we’re coming.”

Mrs. Spotfield’s expression almost said “So’s Christmas.” But the Commodore did not see it, as he went over to join Mrs. Kapua, as soon as Billy spoke. One would have thought he had stayed with us until the lesson in stone work was over, to prevent the possibility of our interrupting it.

Billy tip-toed to the centre of the *lanai*.

“Gather around me, one and all,” he said in a stage whisper. “Come hither.” He advanced to meet us. “There’s a little *hula* along the beach,—just a short walk from here!” he added in a mysterious undertone.

“Oh-h-h——” cried Mrs. Chandler, her eyes shining.

“Oh!” said the Commodore. A non-committal Oh.

“Oh,” murmured Mrs. Spotfield. Her tone hinted at an interested hope of further shock.

Billy glanced over his shoulder. “It’s only the *kui*, you know, a modified *hula*, still—the police——” his voice trailed off significantly. “But follow me,” he added valorously.

And we all followed.

For my part, I’d rather have stayed out in the

moonlight with Frank. We had not alluded again to the business proposition that had tempted him to consider going to Japan, and I could think of little else. But there was no chance for any confidences now, although such a night as this might invite them.

It was only a short walk, as Billy had said. We came to a grove of cocoanut trees, their slim, tall trunks shooting upward at every angle, topped by their huge bouquets of drooping leaves. In their midst, nestled in a clump of thick foliage, was a small cottage. One might have passed it a dozen times without noticing it. Low-lying *hau* trees sheltered it from the road. About it lurked deep shadows, deep as shadows can be in contrast to the tropical clearness of the moonlight that lay beyond.

The hollow thumping of a gourd, beaten in rhythmical order, broke on the still air of the night, its primitive music awakening imagination, conjuring up vague visions, a jumble of something read, or heard, or perhaps seen. The neat, straight veranda, and conventional house didn't seem to fit, as would the grass hut of former days.

An old Hawaiian, a familiar figure at feast and dance, his gray hairs going down to the grave, not in sorrow but in all the unholy joy of native revels, was squatting on the floor at one end of the room we entered. The tall gourd he was beating stood before him.

When we were seated, he began a low chant

which rose and fell in regular and somewhat mournful cadence. As if at a signal, the veranda, the hall, the sands outside, became peopled with a *lei* bedecked, laughing little crowd of natives. Dark-skinned, good-natured faces appeared at doors and windows. And at the same time, three dancers walked into the room, their bare feet falling softly on the matting.

They were dressed in red tarlatan, their short, full skirts reaching to their brown knees. *Leis* of red carnations and the glossy, green *maile* leaf were tied around their waists, fell about their necks, and wreathed their heads, the one saving touch to an incongruous costuming that had replaced the *tapas*, and feathers of former days. No doubt the tarlatan was a joy to the native heart, always delighting in imitation.

The girls were young, but not good looking; their faces were heavy and expressionless. They stood motionless for a moment, while the *hula* drum thumped its monotonous reiteration, then with the chanting for accompaniment, they began slowly moving to the right, then to the left, accentuating the marked time with the shuffling of their feet. In unsmiling unison, business-like, stolid, waving their arms with their curious gestures, undulating their hips, they continued the monotony of movement, coming at last to an abrupt pause. The old Hawaiian's voice died away in a prolonged vowel that quavered through a range of plaintive notes,

Almost immediately one of the girls, evidently the leader, held out one arm stiffly and spoke in Hawaiian, a sort of recitative with a rising inflection at the end. As if in response, all three began the *hula* again with an acceleration of speed and a slight accentuation of abdominal contortion.

"She says: 'On with the dance, let joy be unconfined,'" explained our host.

And he turned to the crowd outside and called out a sentence or two in Hawaiian. There was a roar of delighted laughter in response. The natives adored Billy—or "*Pila*," as they called him. Even the *hula* girls smiled faintly. Each time there was an interlude, the leader again chanted, the dance became a little further pronounced, and Billy's expounding and Hawaiian interpolations grew the more inspired.

The dancers became almost animated. They breathed a trifle quicker, they moved with more spirit and even with a certain amount of abandon. Their *leis* swung and the strongly scented *maile* leaf threw a cloying sweetness on the air that was growing heavier and warmer each moment.

The Commodore jumped to his feet. "*Wela ka hau!*" he shouted with enthusiasm. "*Wela ka hau!*"

We all laughed. *Wela ka hau* is a popular Hawaiian slang of variable meaning; generally translatable into: "Hot stuff." At any rate, it is on a par with the subtlety of the compliment

conveyed and is supposed to be an incentive to further effort. Perhaps the Commodore had been a spectator at a *hula* before.

He dived into his pocket and took out a green-back, and as the girls went outside to rest and cool off, he waved it in the air.

“I’ll have to weight this before I throw it,” he said.

There was an involuntary cry of expostulation, as we saw that it was a hundred dollar bill.

“Why, isn’t it customary to throw money to the dancers?” he asked. “In Japan—in Samoa——”

“But goodness, Commodore, so much!” interposed Mrs. Thornton.

“My dear fellow,” expostulated Billy, “do you want to ruffle our tropic calm with frenzied finance! Just let me manage this.”

The Commodore protested, but was persuaded at last, and he reluctantly put the hundred dollars back in his pocket, as the girls re-entered the room.

We had reached the limit of the orgy, as we well knew from repeated exhibitions, and we soon tired of the monotony of repetition. Billy went up to the leader and spoke to her in Hawaiian, pressing something into her hand at the same time. She smiled broadly and looked almost handsome as she showed her magnificent white teeth.

Exchanging *alohas*, as we went past the group of spectators, we slowly wended our way through the

cocoanut grove, until the little cottage was lost to view in its nest of trees. We reached the bungalow and the *lanai* once more and stood to watch the silvery waters in a silence that no one attempted to break.

The march of progression might be inspiring to the true American citizen by broad daylight, but it seemed only cruel, unrelenting now, with the soft radiance of a moon-lit night casting its spell of witchery over us, as it had over Hawaii's chiefs, and over a land that had been theirs. The surf whispered its unchanging secrets that bound the past to the present, the cocoanuts still nodded their plumes from the shore; the moon, the same moon that had shone on the *hula* of the past, sailed serenely on across the heavens, her goal the same far line where sea and sky had ever met. Diamond Head curved its noble outline, the faithful mountain sentinel that has guarded *Waikiki* through the ages. Progress might sweep on, but it had no power to change Mother Nature's enduring plan. The sound of the *hula* drum came to us fitfully on the breezes. Nature's children were still at play; after all, the tarlatan was only a concession.

When Mrs. Thornton and I went in for our wraps, we came upon Mrs. Chandler trying a few uncertain *hula* steps before the mirror in the hall.

She stopped with a laugh, when she saw us. "It looks easier than it really is," she said.

But it was wonderful how she had caught even

an idea of the movement, and her eyes shone when we told her so.

“I love to try a new dance; I just make a dash at it and somehow——”

She paused. The Commodore had appeared in the doorway.

“Ready, dear?” he asked.

It was a question, but there was no mistaking that the Commodore himself was ready to go, right then.

We left Billy standing in the moonlight, tempering the warmth of his adieux to a perfect equality, while Mrs. Spotfield and Mrs. Chandler, on either side of him, lingered still to say good-night.

VI.

“TALKING of the navy,” said Frank, thoughtfully puffing his cigarette, “if a sailor has a sweetheart in every port, it must be on the principle that to every one that hath shall be given.”

“What would Honolulu be without the navy?” I murmured, and my tones were dulcet, indicating recollections to fit.

“Ask the Singlees!” muttered Frank, rising and taking his hat.

The Singlees have just married their fifth daughter to a fifth officer in the United States Navy. And the Singlee is abroad in the land, no two brothers-in-law being stationed in the same port. Besides, there are three daughters left, so the fate of three more officers is sure. The Singlee girls are supposed to be rich, in spite of their numbers. They keep open house, and what is generally known as the sideboard in most homes is, to quote their steward, “All same one bar.” Besides being hospitable, the Singlees have an indisputable fascination all their own, which makes them the envy of the other girls and the despair of the other mammas, who in the face of five Singlee alliances never lose a chance to allude to the dash of Chinese blood, mixed with Hawaiian, Portuguese, Spanish, and English, that runs in the Singlee veins. But though ready to supply the Singlee genealogy, they give it with a lack of spontaneity born of the conviction that mixed

blood will tell. France is among the few countries that cannot claim the *Singlees*; so the *Singlees*, just to show it isn't their fault and that they permit no national intolerance, have showered French names upon their girls with reckless disregard of a surname that suggests Chinese. Héloïse, Lucille, Clémentine, Lizette, and Félicie are successfully shipped, in the true sense of the word. Adrienne, Céleste, and Léonie are still unattached, though attached beyond a doubt to the navy.

"Would you consult the *Singlees*' five brothers-in-law?" I inquired amiably.

"I would," returned Frank. "They may be prejudiced, but they're always the navy!" And he vanished.

It is evident that, like all the "town boys," Frank is jealous of the "brass button." It must be trying to see them constantly arriving. They come, they choose.

The *California* anchored in "Naval Row" six weeks ago. They had come; the next thing was to choose. This they did according to their rank or their taste—the higher their rank, the more diplomatic their taste. Each ship that has been with us has a list made out; and to each coming ship the list and a "tip" are given. So the officers start their career on shore with their eyes wide open, though, with the spirit of chivalry that is part of their efficacy, any officer who has chosen a different set from the one in which you shine will tell you he

got started wrong. The appeal to set him straight is aimed direct at any true woman's heart. A very comprehensive list was bidden to the ball on the *California*. Every man invited his friends; he had come, he had chosen.

"Oh, just look at the moon!" I heard Teddy Skelton say to Céleste Singlee in a tête-à-tête corner.

Céleste is only sixteen, though confessing to eighteen in order to be considered "out," but she had met a midshipman or two in her day, having started young, and she looked Teddy Skelton in the eye, knowing full well that if she turned her attention on the moon any middy would feel emboldened to concentrate his attention upon the cheek turned to him. Céleste Singlee is coy; her five sisters had all been coy, and Céleste was practising. So she dropped her eyes—her lashes are quite long—and when she raised them the calm light of reason shone in their depths, for she knew that naval rules forbade a middy to marry. Teddy Skelton is good for buttons, though; Céleste wears a bracelet of them. However, with a supply has come a demand, and she wants a girdle. But that is the trouble with Teddy Skelton; like all middies, he gives his buttons lavishly, but impartially, as it were. That is, not singly alone to one, but one each to many. In fact, he confesses frankly that sometimes he has to stop and say unto himself, "Button, button, who's got the button?"

Adrienne Singlee, being twenty-two, though con-

fessing to nineteen—the Singlees having a prejudice against leaving their teens—had an ensign in tow, Ashton Waller. Ashton is intense, and he gives his buttons with a discrimination that might be called rare. He knows all the latest fancy steps, and he dances every dance, but it doesn't take many girls to go around with Ashton. Three girls may suffice for twelve dances; the arithmetical calculation involved is more complicated, however, than just three times four, and not quite so impartial. And Adrienne was plainly satisfied.

Ashton is attractive beyond a doubt. He has travelled and, being musical, he has learned the guitar from a dark-eyed *señorita*, and the *samisen* from a little *musume* in Japan, and Adrienne has taught him the *ukulele* so that he plays it as well as she does herself, and that is saying a good deal. Adrienne was frankly pleased with his devotion, and at supper, when our partners went off for salad, she turned to me and said:

“Ashton is so accomplished, isn't he?”

And I said, “Yes.” It isn't much to repeat, but there is so much in the tone, and I said, “Yes,” warmly.

“He can speak every language,” she went on proudly, “French, German, Hawaiian, Spanish, Swedish, Japanese——”

“How do you know?” I murmured, trying in vain to recall any bump on Ashton's head that would indicate linguistic talent.

"I've heard him, of course," said Adrienne. Then she blushed reminiscently, and, knowing the ensign type myself, it was quite evident that she had been treated to samples of the all-important verb and its conjugations. "*Je t'aime*," "*Ich liebe dich*," "*Aloha nui*"—I could just hear Ashton's inflection. No wonder Adrienne's assertion was sweeping. She had apparently inquired no further, but took the rest on faith. And that should be the way of a maid with a man—particularly a navy man.

Our partners came back just then, and Guy Selby cast a look of absolute agony straight into my eyes, for Guy is a devotee of the tête-à-tête. He cannot, or will not, talk in a crowd—anything over two being a crowd.

"I must have a sympathetic companion to draw me out," he had told me earlier in the evening, when we were sitting out a square dance (Guy never wastes any energy on a square dance). And he left no doubt in my mind that I filled his requirements. I could not resist the appeal in his eyes, so I moved off with him and the salad, and we went to a sheltered spot, where we could see everything, but where it would be impossible for my next partner to find me. Guy makes a specialty of corners that might be termed snug.

I realize, though, that Guy is elusive (lieutenants generally are. He appears intense, in fact it's a habit with him. He talks beautifully of his sincerity,

and knows a lot about sympathy and affinity. He hints darkly of the time that comes in every man's life when he longs to settle down. Frank says, "The nearer his orders, the darker his hints." It is true the *California* won't be here much longer. Guy is subtle—lieutenants often are. His dancing card is an illegible enigma founded on the principle of never putting anything down in black and white; the girl with whom he has tête-à-têteed would never recognize herself thereon. But Guy is not absolutely invulnerable—lieutenants seldom are—and he is sure to tête-à-tête once too often.

"Just look at old Jerry!" he whispered with a chuckle.

And I gazed upon Lieutenant-Commander Jeremiah L. Hamilton, who was passing our flag-draped, sequestered nook, while, oblivious of it and of us, he was unmistakably, if surreptitiously, squeezing the hand of his partner as it lay upon his coat-sleeve. His partner, in white swiss with blue ribbons and a "just out" expression of shining enjoyment, seemed to take it philosophically. Lieutenant-Commander Jeremiah L. Hamilton is handsome, with his steel-blue eyes and his dark hair tinged with gray at the temples.

"He calls it 'fatherly interest,'" murmured Guy. "After all, age has its compensations."

Captain Bryce was escorting Mrs. Fletcher across the deck. He never forgets to be conservative, and he remembers to forget the girls when eti-

quette demands abnegation. It is not all joy to be a captain ; Mrs. Fletcher is somewhat pompous and equally heavy in weight and ideas. But she has a position.

“ It’s a perfect shame such a nice boy should be so devoted to that Mabel Solley,” I said as she passed with Lieutenant Bailey.

“ That ‘ nice boy ’ is thirty-six and married—when he is at home,” said Guy. “ When he is on a cruise, though, he says he is not a bigoted married man.”

“ And he looks so blond and so—so——”

“ Exactly so—innocent, you mean. Well, Dicksy is all right; he’s just looking for types. He says he is not narrow, and he will never have to kick himself for a snob. He has read in a book of poems, on the Isles of the Pacific, about a dusky maiden in a pool, and he says he is not going to travel with his eyes shut.”

All I replied was, “ Oh ! ”

The Commodore and Mr. Mitchell had been standing near by for several moments, earnestly engaged in conversation and as the band stopped playing, I heard the Commodore say:

“ Don’t mention it, my dear fellow. Of course going about as I do, I often run upon chances like this. I’m only too glad to let my friends in when I can.”

“ He’s a good chap all right,” said Guy, turning to me. “ On one of his trips he and two or

three other fellows came across a guano island near the Peruvian coast. It's a great find; why some of the beds are fifty and sixty feet thick. The trouble is, there are only a few shares, but the Commodore was talking to Mitchell, Jo Elkins, and me, the other day, and he's going to see what he can do to get us in on it. It's sure money."

"My, isn't that lovely," I said. And I thought of Frank.

"The Commodore is lucky," said Guy, "but he's generous and willing to let others share his luck, that's one thing certain."

"Come along, you two," said Mrs. Fletcher, putting ruthlessly aside one of the carefully draped flags of our nook. "We are going to have a Virginia Reel, and we want you in our set."

Guy smiled with his mouth and looked daggers with his eyes. It was quite a feat; still, you could hardly call his smile spontaneous. Mrs. Fletcher smiled gaily back at him, oblivious of his eyes, being satisfied that her rank and her charms formed a combination that made obedience at once a duty and a pleasure.

Mrs. Fletcher is the wife of Captain Chauncey Riversley Fletcher, and she came to Honolulu to await the arrival of the flagship of the Pacific Station. She loves to dance, though somewhat plump for sustained exertion. But partners being forthcoming, dancing is an easy proposition, at least in

one way. Naval men know their duty—dances—and the majority do not flinch. Besides, Mrs. Fletcher is generally chaperoning a belle or two.

Mrs. Spotfield came up with one of the middies as we reached the crowded part of the deck. In pale pink, with her little ankle strap slippers and her skirt short enough to show them, she gave, as usual, the ingénue effect, so dear to her heart.

“Have you had supper, Mrs. Fletcher?” asked the middy. “Do let me get you some ice-cream.”

“Oh, you bad boy!” cried Mrs. Spotfield playfully. “Ice-cream is fattening and you know it. Don’t be tempted, Mrs. Fletcher.” She slipped her arm through Mrs. Fletcher’s and seemed unconscious that she looked particularly slender beside her.

Mrs. Fletcher did not look happy, nor pleasant. It is not soothing to be reminded of fat when you are about to indulge in a Virginia Reel. “These little things are great to little men.” When Mrs. Fletcher is an admiral’s wife Mrs. Spotfield’s husband may wonder what has gone wrong with his “pull.”

Mrs. Thornton, looking handsome in white, with no ornament but her diamond sunburst scintillating against her hair, danced with Commodore Chandler, and Mrs. Chandler was next to me, with Frank for her vis-à-vis. She was unusually pretty and dashing in a yellow crèpe that clung, even to the extent of arousing conjecture as to the texture

of her lingerie. It was very becoming and the color seemed to bring out the reddish tints in her hair. She did not wear a jewel, nor an ornament of any sort. But Mrs. Chandler, you could see, knew how and when to refrain. The faintest, most subtle perfume escaped in elusive whiffs from the meshes of her lace, as she moved.

Mrs. Kapua was dancing with Billy Barker, but her heart was not in it; she was through with Billy, and even she couldn't revive a flirtation. Her smiles and glances were all directed at the Commodore. Mrs. Kapua's smile is very pretty, with its flash of exquisite white teeth, and sparkle of dark eyes. She was dressed in white gauze, with her gorgeous ruby pendant gleaming against her dark, clear skin, and in her hair was twined a *lei* of red carnations.

There's one advantage that the Virginia Reel can boast, and it is, that if you don't care for your partner, it really does not matter, because there's a row of other partners facing you and you can forget your own.

Mrs. Spotfield forgot the middy, and when her position in the line had moved until she was at the head of it, and Billy Barker advanced to meet her from the foot, it really seemed as if the Reel was going to pause entirely, while they indulged in a heart-to-heart talk.

The middy, in the enthusiasm of youth and a desire for his turn to come, shouted out joyously,

“Brush by!”

Mrs. Spotfield laughed and blushed, as she retreated to her place.

Mrs. Chandler shrugged her shoulders. “The usual navy type,” she murmured, just loud enough for me to hear.

She refrained from saying any more, but I guessed that she was not alluding to the middy.

“Lieutenant Selby evidently believes in monopoly,” said Frank, claiming me after the Virginia Reel; his tone was far from honeyed.

“That’s what he always tells me,” I replied brightly.

And I tried to look modest, though pleased. Jealousy may be a green-eyed monster, but it is so soothing at times.

Captain Bryce came along to interrupt us, with a bevy of officers from the Italian man-of-war, in port for ten days. Adrienne Singlee, the Thorntons, the Chandlers, Mrs. Kapua, Billy Barker, and Mrs. Spotfield, who were near by, were introduced after Frank and I had gone through the ordeal of trying to catch and remember one name, at least. We all suffered in proportion to a lack of education in French, which the officers spoke, English being quite beyond them.

Of course Adrienne can speak a few words of Italian; there are just as good fish in one country as ever came out of another and lack of language would never be the undoing of a Singlee.

A dapper little lieutenant asked in French from what opera the air was taken that the singing boys were giving with such expression. It was a *hula*; one suggestive of infinite possibilities. No doubt the dapper lieutenant thought that everything musical must have its origin in Italian opera, but I wonder if he had ever seen a stage production that would do justice to a *hula*.

I was making up my mind how to explain in French, when Adrienne murmured something in Italian,—or it might have been Greek, as far as I knew. The officers looked puzzled, but they were so polite that they quickly uttered something that sounded credulous, and might have been: “Exactly so.” And Adrienne seemed to feel confident that she had at least been tactful, if not entirely satisfactory.

As Frank said, who could explain a Hawaiian dance to an Italian? It was asking too much of any language—not to speak of the innocence of youth.

“Ah, it’s fascinating, it’s alive, it’s an incentive, this national dance of yours!” cried Mrs. Chandler.

She moved away from her husband with a sinuous twist of her supple body, her arms and hands waving in characteristic gestures, wonderfully clever in imitation.

It seemed almost involuntary. We all gazed at her appreciatively. Billy Barker was fanning Mrs. Spotfield, but he stopped fanning.

"How did you learn!" exclaimed Mrs. Thornton.

"Am I responsible?" asked Billy Barker, with ill-concealed delight, as he left Mrs. Spotfield and came nearer.

Mrs. Chandler had scored.

"Oh, it's the fashion to know the dance of every country," she replied, laughing over her shoulder as she retreated, with the swaying movement of the dance still further pronounced.

I happened to glance at the Commodore; he looked annoyed, and as the hem of his wife's skirt trailed near him, he moved a step forward and put his foot down on it firmly. About two yards of crêpe promptly responded to this appeal and lay upon the ground.

As Adrienne said afterwards, "Those polite Italians fell upon one knee and offered pins."

Frank asked, "Whose knee?" And I was weak enough to laugh, but Adrienne seemed to lose herself in solving this proposition.

Mrs. Chandler looked more amused than angry. She murmured something I didn't catch to her husband, and he scowled. When he caught my eye he explained that he always frowned when he faced an electric light. But there is a distinction, if not a difference, between a scowl and a frown.

"You jealous boy!" laughed Mrs. Chandler, a touch of irony in her tone.

The Commodore replied, but under his breath,

so it wouldn't be fair to quote him, even if it did sound like: "Jealous—Hell!"

"I'm very proud of Mrs. Chandler's dancing," he said quickly, addressing us all; "but she has scarcely danced since she was a little child, though it's one of her natural gifts."

"Oh, sometimes I have allowed myself to be persuaded," said Mrs. Chandler.

By this time all the pins were gone, or, rather, pinned.

"What an exquisite diamond ornament that is in your hair!" said the Commodore to Mrs. Thornton, "if you will excuse a personal remark."

"I think it is pretty," Mrs. Thornton rejoined modestly, but she beamed on the Commodore. "Mr. Thornton took great pains in selecting these stones, and I really think he is more proud of my pin than I."

"Incomparable!" declared the Commodore. "The Shah of Persia gave Mrs. Chandler a diamond that we are taking to Tiffany's to have set. It is a large stone, but that middle one of yours is of even more remarkable purity and brilliancy. It makes your eyes seem all the brighter."

This was a happy touch—for Mrs. Thornton; the rest of us began to feel a trifle *de trop*, but Colonel and Mrs. Harvey came along opportunely, and I moved away a few steps to shake hands with them. I soon forgot all else but their alleged determination to make the army as popular in Honolulu as the navy has always been.

After a dozen or so pleasant and politic remarks, Mrs. Harvey varied the monotony by criticising the lack of etiquette existing in Honolulu.

“ You seem to think it sufficient here for the women to call and take their husbands’ cards,” she said somewhat consequentially. “ The men seldom think it necessary to accompany their wives.”

I felt quite guilty until I remembered that, as a spinster, I wasn’t responsible.

“ Marriage is not a failure, because man makes the money and woman makes the calls,” I said, trying to brighten up the situation.

Mrs. Harvey smiled faintly, knowing it was expected of her, but she was standing on her dignity and she could scarcely be hilarious.

“ Let me introduce Mrs. Lumsing,” I said, as she approached with her husband.

The Harveys and the Lumsings exchanged bows, while Mrs. Harvey’s eyebrows asked, “ Who are the Lumsings? ” in a curve possible only to the eyebrow of society. Mrs. Lumsing was pretty, but dubious as to her hair, which was brightly yellow, and enigmatical as to her gown, which was built on a “ naught venture, naught have,” model that spoke the French artist in its daring and betrayed the “ little dressmaker ” in its finish. Mr. Lumsing looked *blasé*, elegant, travelled. His father is Cheong Lum Sing; he wears a queue and has risen, through shrewdness and sugar, to the dignity of a rich merchant. His mother is a typical Hawaiian, with a predilection for the fattening *poi*, to which

her figure testifies. And they sent young Fong Lum Sing to England for an education. He returned to us Cyril Lumsing, with an English wife, and an English accent besides; a simple matter of attachment all through.

“Aw, by Jove! the effect of these brightly colored flags is fetching, don’t cher know,” drawled Mr. Lumsing twirling his monocle. “How smart Mrs. Thornton’s gown is to-night! She’s a ripping good sort all around.”

“Yes,” assented Mrs. Lumsing; her voice held a soft note, but, alas, it was cockney. “Doesn’t Mrs. Thornton remind you of Lady Georgiana, my cousin, Cyril?”

“Aw, yes, by Jove!”

But everybody forgot Lady Georgiana, for Cheong Lum Sing in gorgeous purple blouse, with head newly shaven to his queue, and his wife, colossal in bulk and only a few shades fairer than her black silk *holoku*, joined the family group.

“We have been looking for you, papa,” said Mrs. Lumsing.

And Colonel and Mrs. Harvey looked bewildered and helpless withal, which is not unusual in the face of a Chinese puzzle. The strains of “*Sobre las Olas*” pulsated about us with its lingering notes of sweetness.

I turned and started towards Frank who was waiting for me a short distance off.

“You can’t be too careful!” I heard the Com-

modore's voice mutter as I paused for a moment to watch the waltzers circling around the broad deck, gay with bunting, electric lights, palms, and flowers, a group of interested sailors in white making an effective background. I was in a quiet spot by an innocent looking flag. Evidently the Commodore was on the other side; any flag on the *California* was apt to mean a tête-à-tête corner behind it.

"It's sure to come sooner or later—it always comes, as we know by precious experience, but I don't care to hurry it by fool invitation," growled the Commodore. "A false move——"

"Means a trip," interrupted Mrs. Chandler's voice impatiently. "Don't be so cross about it; I'll be careful, but you——"

"I have to," rejoined the Commodore hastily. "Where would you be if I didn't look out for you?"

It seemed to me it was about time for me to go on and point the distinction between overhearing and listening.

"Phew! but it's hot!" said Frank as I reached him. "It's by the sweat of our brows, verily, that we know society in the tropics."

"Oh, Frank!" I said. "I wish you could get some stock in the Commodore's guano island. Such a chance—Jo Elkins and Mr. Mitchell and——"

"That's one thing decent about the Commodore, I must admit," interposed Frank. "He is willing to let others in on a lucky find. But I

couldn't go in on a thing like that, even if I had the chance. It takes surplus coin, you know."

"I suppose so," I said reluctantly; and I tried to smother a sigh. "The Commodore is really devoted to his wife," I continued irrelevantly. "I think she must be delicate; he's so solicitous of her health."

"He doesn't seem happy to-night," rejoined Frank, an element of unadulterated joy in his voice. "I'll bet a hat he's been losing at poker again."

"He's a great card player, isn't he?"

"Yes, he always gets up a game, but he's been losing steadily."

"You're sympathetic!" I observed.

"I haven't taken a fancy to him," admitted Frank.

"That's plain."

"Well, when I don't fancy a person, I won't make a secret of it."

"And when you do fancy?"

"It's wiser to make a secret of that sometimes."

"That's an open question!"

"Open questions are doubtful; often they should be shut."

"If you're trying to say 'shut up,' take a straight route," I suggested cheerily.

"If I dared take a straight route——"

"Give me this waltz," demanded Guy in his own inimitable way,—the requests of other men always paled beside his flattering force.

I had not seen him coming, and this was so sudden I almost fell into his arms. As the music stopped, we did.

“A perfect waltz; you danced as if your soul were in it!” whispered Guy tenderly, and, not to be contradictory, I bestowed a soulful glance upon him.

I was thinking that Frank would have dared to say, “Shut up”—with polite modulation, of course.

All roads may lead to Rome, but where would that straight route have led that Frank hesitated to take?

I wonder.

VII.

“Oh, by the way,” said Mrs. Spotfield.

I felt as if we were coming to the postscript of a letter. I had surmised that Mrs. Spotfield’s visit was not for love of me alone. We had discussed the possibility of rain, the cleverness of Japanese maids, the ball on the *California*, and there had come a pause.

“By the way, I wonder if you could tell me how to go about getting a *hula* teacher. I am crazy to learn a few steps just to surprise Johnnie when he comes.”

“It is graceful, isn’t it?” I responded. “But it is not easy. I never have been able to imitate those gestures.”

“I really would not call it graceful,” interposed Mrs. Spotfield. “I was so surprised when Mr. Barker used that word in connection with such an exhibition. I suppose his native wife taught him to like it.”

“Oh, but Mrs. Spotfield, you could hardly judge; who could be graceful in stiff tarlatan skirts!”

“And then, take Mrs. Chandler’s dancing of it!” supplemented Mrs. Spotfield.

“Why, I thought she did it so cleverly!” I cried.

“Did you?”

Mrs. Spotfield accented this simple remark with a nicety so calculated that I was divided between a desire to throw something at her and a wish that I could find a reason for it.

"Mrs. Chandler is a very attractive woman," she continued, "but one can see that she never learned to dance until her bones were formed. Perhaps she wasn't born to a circle of society where dancing is a necessary accomplishment—you can never tell. And you know how it is when you learn later in life—there's never the same suppleness."

"But you really have no idea how hard it is to learn the *hula*, Mrs. Spotfield. And I know, after you try, you'll think as I do, that it is wonderful how Mrs. Chandler has caught it."

"Oh, I do think it is wonderful, simply wonderful," agreed Mrs. Spotfield. "Still, it is only a wriggle, after all. Once catch the secret and it is yours. It would not be remarkable for me to grasp it; I was born a dancer. It came to me intuitively. Every one said when I married Johnnie Spotfield that it was an ideal match as we would dance through life together. He's the best waltzer in the Navy, and that's saying a lot, you know."

I warmly assented.

"Guy Selby is the next best, and he says he would rather have you for a partner than any one in Honolulu; he doesn't even except me, the bad boy."

I was weak enough to feel pleased.

"Perhaps Mrs. Kapua would show you the *hula*," I began.

"Mrs. Kapua? Oh, lovely! Do you think she would?"

"We might go and ask her," I suggested.

As we entered Mrs. Kapua's *lanai*, screened from the passer-by with its luxuriantly growing vines, Commodore Chandler rose from a big arm chair, and a cloud of smoke, and essayed a pleasant smile at our arrival.

Mrs. Kapua greeted us with the cordiality peculiar to Hawaii. Just a musical murmur, with its note of caress, a gesture, and we were welcome. As usual, she was in white, but instead of her favorite red carnations, she had about her neck a *lei* of yellow *ilima* blossoms.

"Do you object to smoking?" asked the Commodore.

His tone was quite genial and made up for any lack of warmth in his greeting. We assured him that we did not and he assured us that our good hearts would win us a seat—or two seats—in Heaven. We assured him that his cigar was so good that the goodness in our hearts was not so heavenly, after all. He assured us that were the cigar less good, it would refuse to smoke in our society.

By this time, I dropped out. Mrs. Spotfield and he proceeded. We sat and listened. Mrs. Kapua retained her admirable composure, but I didn't have

so much to start with and mine had all evaporated. Why not get to the object of our visit?

“We came to ask Mrs. Kapua to teach Mrs. Spotfield,—” I began—

“To teach me how to swim with that wonderful stroke of yours,” Mrs. Spotfield quickly interposed.

And she gave me a glance that indicated the Commodore’s presence. Mrs. Spotfield had never struck me as being a prude before.

“Why certainly,” assented Mrs. Kapua calmly.

She was a true child of the Islands, gracious, generous, charming in her spirit of hospitality, sincere in her anxiety to please, but Mrs. Kapua knew that no *malihini* could rival her in the water and she never hesitated to teach all she knew, from surf-board riding to simple every-day swimming. Neither would she have refused to teach the *hula* if she had been asked.

“But which stroke do you want to learn, Mrs. Spotfield?”

As Mrs. Spotfield didn’t know one from another and didn’t want to learn any, she paused an instant.

“Well, the one that shoots you through the water, you know.”

“Oh, yes,” Mrs. Kapua was probably not enlightened, but she was too tactful to let this appear. “Suppose we go in now,” she proposed, “and I will give you a lesson; I have plenty of bathing suits.”

She was a picture of grace and ease as she re-

clined in a long wicker chair, her head resting against cushions of a golden hue. But, with a quick movement, she was out of it. It is not easy to rise from a steamer chair without a hitch in the proceeding, but Mrs. Kapua's firm muscles, trained by a daily swim, and by riding, and tennis, and all the outdoor sports loved by the Hawaiians, were under perfect control.

"Oh no, not now!" protested Mrs. Spotfield.

Poor Mrs. Spotfield; she really had no love for the water.

"I wouldn't learn before the Commodore for anything," she added with a coquettish glance.

"I'm off for the *Gelda!*" The Commodore seized his hat.

"Nonsense,—don't go!" cried Mrs. Spotfield. "Now be good and sit down again."

The Commodore gave an involuntary start. There was a quick foot-fall on the garden walk, and a light run up the low steps.

"*Aloha,*" called Mrs. Chandler's voice. "Here I am."

And she appeared in an opening of the vines at the side of the *lanai*. She looked from one to the other of us. Her expression changed. One might have thought she was disappointed.

Mrs. Kapua went forward to where Mrs. Chandler stood, apparently rooted amidst the vines.

"Why, I thought you said Thursday eh, and

to-day is Wednesday. But it is all right,—one day is as good as another; so come in and I'll——”

“Mrs. Kapua was going to teach me a new embroidery stitch,” interposed Mrs. Chandler, as she came forward and nodded gaily all around. “I thought you would be at the Club,” she added.

She looked at the Commodore and he looked at her. I had no one to look at and I was sorry Frank had gone to Maui to try a case. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Kapua does not do fancy work. If she had an extra hour, she would be more likely to go into the sea. Mrs. Chandler was disturbed, but it didn’t seem to be because she objected to finding the Commodore making an afternoon call without her. She never seemed jealous of the Commodore. She appeared almost guilty, more as if she were discovered and not as though she had discovered him.

“There was no one at the Club and I just dropped in to ask Mrs. Kapua to come on board to tea,” explained the Commodore, gallantly falling in line, for explanations were certainly in order.

We all sat down and made conversation. It was labored beyond a doubt. The end of each subject was plainly in sight at its introduction and one topic followed another, each failing in expansion as effectually as the one before, while Mrs. Kapua’s musical interjections struck the final chord. Mrs. Chandler sat on the edge of her chair, like a pretty bird

ready for flight. Mrs. Spotfield looked at her, when her head was turned the other way, and through her, when she met her eye. The Commodore bit the cigar he had been smoking and growled his polite remarks. Only Mrs. Kapua's serenity was undisturbed. She was not the kind of hostess to be affected by pauses; she would probably have preferred them to the brain fag threatening one and all from a reckless squandering of ideas.

The latest novel was settled in two sentences; even the weather theme consumed only three.

Mrs. Chandler told us the plot of a vaudeville sketch: "Now making a hit on the circuit." But it was hard to see why it had succeeded.

The Commodore rose to hunt for an ash tray and no one reminded him that one was by his side; action was too badly needed.

Through the vines crept gentle little breezes, in waves of scented warmth. Whiffs of ylang ylang, and jessamine, of magnolia blossoms, and of growing limes, and figs, blended delicately with the soft air and added to its balm. In their huge pots about the *lanai*, the tall palms and drooping ferns rustled faintly as if to catch the delicious fragrance and waft it back again. The hanging baskets of maiden hair, big balls of feathery green, swayed responsive too. The surf came to us in sighing murmurs, lazily rolling in the summer calm.

But, I was thinking what to say next and well

aware that this disturbance of mind was equally divided among us on the *lanai*.

A low whistle from near-by was repeated nearer, and still nearer. The vines parted and a hand was put through, waving in the air with an effect almost weird. Mrs. Kapua peered through the vines and laughed.

“Mr. William Barker eh,” she announced.

And every one heaved a sigh, deep in proportion to its relief.

“I’ve been manicured,” confided Mr. Barker, as he joined us in the *lanai* “so I thought I would enter that way,—put my best hand forward, so to speak.”

“Manicured? Sounds interesting,” said Mrs. Spotfield, moving up on the sofa and smiling at Billy.

He sat down beside her. “It is interesting; all the boys go to be manicured now. Formerly we had an overdressed, overblondined and overtalkative lady, who came and settled in our midst.”

“And what’s doing now?” asked the Commodore, with undisguised interest.

“Half Chinese and half Hawaiian—good looking, neat, simple, and quiet. Mrs. Lumsing had the girls taught and put them up in business. They’re the joy, and pet advertisement, of the Promotion Committee. And besides, they’ve run the blonde manicure lady out.”

"Mrs. Lumsing? I believe I saw her on the *California*; perhaps she didn't want a rival blonde in town." Mrs. Spotfield's tone was more than a little superior.

"Let me tell you about Mrs. Lumsing," I began warmly, "she really deserves a lot of credit. She came here a perfect stranger, a bride, about a year ago. The papers were full of stories about her, an English girl, a vaudeville actress, who had left the allurement of the stage to marry a Chinese student and all the rest of it, including speculations as to the possible outcome of such a match. Of course the Lumsings are rich, still it seemed a risky marriage. We suspected that Cyril Lumsing had won her with some wonderful Claude Melnotte story and we felt sorry for her. Everybody called——"

"Between curiosity and business interests, and with sympathy on tap, Honolulu turned out," interpolated Billy.

"And we found that instead of moping and looking unhappy, instead of making a tragedy out of her strange position and getting pale and thin over the task of trying to adjust herself to Chinese tradition and Hawaiian habits, Mrs. Cyril was full of interested plans, social, intellectual, and charitable. She is fast winning for herself a place in the community."

"How clever!" murmured Mrs. Chandler. "She's actually revelling in a unique situation; she saw the dramatic possibilities, took Honolulu

for her stage and is featuring those Chinese-Hawaiian girls,—lovely!"

"I've often noticed the Chinese-Hawaiian girls, a new race of beauties growing up in your midst; they're like sleek seals," said the Commodore.

"How awful,—such a mixture!" cried Mrs. Spotfield.

"The Chinese is an ideal husband; he is a good provider." Mrs. Kapua spoke feelingly.

Mr. Kapua, after the manner of the Hawaiian husband, had never provided. He had lived on his wife's money and might have even succeeded in spending it all, if he hadn't died young.

"Oh, do tell us more about Mrs. Lumsing." Mrs. Chandler's eyes were bright with interest.

I laughed: 'It's too long a story; she really would fill a book.'

"Well, how are we getting on with the *hula*?" enquired Mr. Barker genially, if not altogether apropos.

This bomb seemed to be thrown inadvertently, and if it exploded, no one jumped. But it occurred to me that perhaps Mr. Barker had been recommending Mrs. Kapua as a teacher too.

"Mrs. Chandler, how far have you progressed? There was not much more for you to learn."

"Oh, I——" began Mrs. Chandler.

"Dancing is not Mrs. Chandler's trump card," the Commodore interposed. "Now Mrs. Spotfield is a born dancer—any one can see that—she could

learn the *hula*. No doubt you have learnt it, Mrs. Spotfield? Won't you dance for us?"

"Not I!" cried Mrs. Spotfield. "Aren't you awful to suggest such a thing; I don't know a step of it. It's quite bad enough for me to plead guilty to the skirt dance."

Mrs. Spotfield smiled and looked too young to be guilty of anything.

"You certainly would have to be a child of nature and forget those awful modern dances, before you could learn," said Mrs. Kapua in her musical voice.

The Commodore probably did not know that Mrs. Kapua never lost her temper. He looked from her to Mrs. Spotfield expectantly, and back again. The ground they were treading on was rather dangerous. The Commodore did not seem dismayed. In fact, judging by his expression, his thoughts ran: "If I can't see a *hula*, I may see a fight." I began to believe that the Commodore was a man of primitive instincts.

"Poor old *Hawaii nei*," said Mrs. Kapua, lingering on each word with her tones of tender caress. "We are not really so wicked here, although it is true we have vulgarity, just as you have it. But in our spirit of accepting it lies the difference. We are taught to criticize the act, if we must,—but the actor, we do not judge. If we know anything to the discredit of either friend, or foe, we pretend we don't eh. We, in Hawaii, are nice to every

one and if our worst enemy speaks to us of friendship, we only answer: ‘*Ae-e-e—*’ and seem to believe.”

Mrs. Kapua paused and no one spoke. Whether she meant to speak for her country, or to read a lesson to Mrs. Spotfield, her soft eyes did not betray, nor did the music in her voice reveal. Seemingly she had forgotten us and her loved *Hawaii nei* was her only passion.

“The *hula kui*,” she resumed, “was in the old days, the Military *Hula*, and danced only by men. There was nothing objectionable in it and through that, I suppose, the modified form has come to be called the *kui*. It could not shock the most prudish.”

“Oh, Mrs. Kapua, do show us how you dance it,” I interposed.

“Oh do!” cried Mrs. Chandler, sitting forward.

“Oh yes, please,” Mrs. Spotfield begged girlishly.

“*Wela ka hau!*” shouted Billy Barker, throwing his hat in the air and catching it with considerable skill.

Mrs. Kapua was laughingly obdurate.

The Commodore rose, and bending over her he said, with considerable sincerity in his voice, “I hope you will consent—for us—Mrs. Kapua.”

She looked up at him. With a gesture of surrender, she slowly rose to her full height and threw back her head.

For a moment she stood gracefully, her figure beautiful, firm, unrestricted, the waist line not too clearly defined, and with the wonderful poise possible to her well-trained muscles.

She began to hum in an undertone, changing the key once, or twice, as though she had not quite got it to suit her, all the while slightly moving her body and waving her arms to and from her in the characteristic fluctuations, so distinctively a feature of the dance.

Billy Barker picked up a tiny *ukulele* and struck a few chords.

“How’s this?” With an inimitable swing and dash, he started the inspiriting strains of our most popular *hula*. It was one frequently played for a two-step and we all knew it well.

Mrs. Kapua listened for a moment with a smile disclosing her exquisite teeth. She broke into an accompanying song in Hawaiian, the peculiar accentuation exaggerated, until every one of us was marking the time with a regular clapping, or stamping.

There was a hint only of the *kui* in a rhythmic motion of her lithe body, but a story of flowers and of love, as though to compare the opening of a blossom to the awakening of a heart, was told in her supple hands, her flexible wrists, her tapering fingers. And then she began to dance with an undulation that grew more pronounced, but was always precisely gauged to a stopping point full of grace

and a certain delicacy of insinuation. Hands, arms, body, and expression, unfolded an ever-changing story, ever-old and ever-new, telling it in gestures, and confirming it with a sparkle of dark eyes. But, with a twist of the wrist, she vacillated and began again, with a suggestion of caress, a confession of wavering, a promise of capitulation. With a sinuous motion, she came towards us, retreating with a spiral twisting, back and forth, with undeviating regularity, but the imagination was constantly aroused by the invitation of the advance, the coquetry of a sudden restraint, the subtle significance in gesticulations half caught in their quick changes.

A rich color flushed in her dark, clear skin; a light shone in her eyes, deepening, and glowing, softening and provocative; a dimple came and went at the corners of her upturned mouth.

Mrs. Kapua paused before the Commodore, at last, with a breathless little laugh. Perhaps she thought it was time to interrupt the expression with which he was devouring her. It was plain that the Commodore had forgotten there was anybody in the world but Mrs. Kapua. He seemed absolutely fascinated.

I must say I was glad that Frank was on Maui.

I glanced at Mrs. Spotfield; she was still brightly animated and I knew she thought that she could learn the *hula*. Perhaps she saw only a wriggle. But Mrs. Chandler looked discouraged.

“ Shall we go on the *Gelda* for tea? ” she asked, after a few moments.

Billy Barker accepted promptly. And Mrs. Spotfield almost simultaneously. She was going to take no risks with Mr. Barker.

Mrs. Chandler slipped her arm through mine: “ Please come, ” she said.

And as Frank was on Maui
The Commodore and Mrs. Kapua were already
sauntering towards the gate.

VIII.

WHEN we were climbing the *Gelda's* ladder, Mrs. Spotfield was right behind me.

“Don’t tell Mrs. Chandler or the Commodore why we went to Mrs. Kapua’s,” she whispered to me; “a secret shared by so many is no secret at all; and I do so want to surprise Johnnie.”

I promised her I would say nothing.

“And you know,” she added, “it would be exactly like Mrs. Chandler to want to learn it too, just because she thinks Mr. Barker is so crazy over it.”

The Commodore, who had run nimbly up the ladder, ahead of us, was standing at the top, and as he helped each of us on to the deck, he made some remark that was at once welcoming and complimentary. We were used to this ready gallantry in the Navy. It really seemed as if all sailors must be born with a love for the ladies, as well as a love for the sea. When I said this to the Commodore, he replied that it was the element of uncertainty in both.

“All games of chance interest me!” he exclaimed. “And talking of games, we must have one,” he added, turning to the others. “We can play on deck; there isn’t too much breeze.”

“Not until after tea,” declared Mrs. Chandler. “I am no card player, so I can remember distinctly that you were all promised tea. Where are the

manners of my husband!" She shook her finger at him playfully.

But, after tea, it was Mrs. Chandler who rang for one of the stewards and had him bring out a card table. The Commodore looked up from the conversation he was having with Billy Barker, in which he had been absorbed.

"Why, I'd forgotten," he said, "that's so; we did speak of having a game, didn't we?"

"Oh yes, a game by all means eh," said Mrs. Kapua eagerly; she was always ready for cards. "Shall it be poker, or bridge?"

Bridge was finally decided on. The usual preliminaries followed and when it was discovered that Mrs. Spotfield, Mrs. Chandler, and I, did not consider ourselves sufficiently expert to make the fourth, the Commodore, with a truly soothing indifference, assured us that they would really rather talk and enjoy the scenery anyway.

"Why not get the Doctor to play?" suggested Mrs. Chandler.

"By Jove, good idea!" acceded her husband.

"He is not a society man; we just can't make him go out; but, he's obliging and he doesn't mind cards so much," explained Mrs. Chandler.

The Commodore began to demur again about leaving Mrs. Spotfield and me out in the cold, but we persuaded him that we really would enjoy looking on.

The Doctor—Dr. Stirling Dwinelle—was

brought on, so to speak. He shook hands all around, a neutral sort of handshake that left no distinct impression. I could well believe he was not a society man; his manner did not have the ease of the Commodore.

The cards were cut, and the game was started without further delay.

“What are we playing for?” asked Mrs. Kapua.

“Five cents?” The Commodore looked from one to the other. Each assented.

“Auction, of course,” said the Doctor.

“Auction! And five cents! Goodness, I thought it was straight Bridge!” Mrs. Kapua exclaimed.

“Suppose we put the game lower,—say two cents,” proposed the Commodore.

“Just as you like—five cents is all right for me.” The Doctor spoke quickly, but tentatively.

Mr. Barker nodded. The Commodore shrugged his shoulders. Mrs. Kapua laughed.

“All right; I’m reckless,—your deal, Commodore.”

Mrs. Kapua was a good player. So was Billy Barker; he was sure of himself and his risky makes were bound to tell—either one way, or the other. Cards were second nature to the Commodore, playing every night at sea, as he told us he did. And the Doctor certainly appeared to be face to face with his only passion. There was an intentness

about the lines of his mouth, even thus early in the game.

I must say, I didn't care much for the Doctor. I would never have chosen him for my family physician. He had a foreign type of face. He might have been an Italian, although he was not very dark. He wasn't bad looking, but when he was introduced to me, his eyes seemed to actually slide across mine, and as they slid, it struck me that they oughtn't to be blue anyway. But, why not? Blue eyes were often seen with black hair. In the Doctor's case, it seemed as if his hair was dyed, or his eyes were bleached. He reminded me of a Human Exhibit who had been used as an advertisement for a Beauty Parlor and as if it would require some time for him to become natural again. But anyway, shifting eyes would mar even an Adonis and that the Doctor could never claim to be. Of course he had not had much chance to talk, still it was quite evident that he would never talk a patient to death. He had ventured only one remark and that was to start a discussion for higher stakes.

"Allow me," said the Commodore, leaning over to take the pack from Mrs. Kapua, as she was about to shuffle.

She laughed. And then Mrs. Kapua proceeded to show the Commodore what she could do with her inimitable hands and wrists. No card-sharp, nor sleight-of-hand performer could manipulate a pack more deftly than could Mrs. Kapua, and when

she ended by shuffling the cards in the air with a graceful dexterity, the Commodore sank on one knee and humbly apologized.

And as he arose, I noticed that he and the Doctor, who had looked impatient during this interlude, exchanged glances. I was glad that the Doctor could meet some one's eye; perhaps he was only bashful, after all.

"Luck's against me, that's sure," said Billy Barker, as he was dealing.

"Go and sit by him; do go, Mrs. Spotfield, and see if his luck won't change," suggested Mrs. Chandler.

Mrs. Spotfield promptly took her place by Billy's side; so promptly that when he said:

"Come and be my Mascot," it sounded quite like an anti-climax.

I couldn't help wondering what had come over the spirit of Mrs. Chandler's dreams; it certainly was not her usual custom to throw Mr. Barker into Mrs. Spotfield's path. Did she consider it her duty as hostess to be so magnanimous?

"I'm tired watching, and I believe you are," she whispered to me, after a little. "We'll just slip off and have a talk."

I followed her to the other end of the deck and we went below, as she wanted to see if Yone, her maid, was mending her skirt. Mrs. Chandler assured me she would be a treasure on land, but there were so many beaux for her on the yacht that

she was distracted, and was quite likely to be concentrating all the gathers in one spot.

“It’s the gown I wore on the *California*,” added Mrs. Chandler. “You know, I really went to Mrs. Kapua’s this afternoon to ask her to teach me the *hula*—she certainly did say Wednesday—and then to meet the Commodore like that, when I particularly wanted to keep it a secret from him! I want to surprise him, so don’t tell a soul, will you, *Chérie*? ”

I began to wonder if all husbands had to be fed on surprises.

“The Commodore hates to have me do anything conspicuous, so I’m learning it just for him. People are so ready to criticize that I wouldn’t want to give them the chance. My friends might talk aside, but my enemies would use the stage aside, which is quite as loud as the *hula*, isn’t it? ”

I supposed it was.

“Mrs. Kapua must be very rich,” added Mrs. Chandler. “She owns about half the Islands and all the sugar, doesn’t she? ”

“Not that bad,” I said laughing. “You know Mr. Barker has some, for one.”

“Yes, I know. Did his wife really leave him such a tremendous fortune? ”

“Yes; she really did.”

“And Guy Selby, they say, has money outside his pay; is that so, do you think? ”

“I believe it is.”

“The reason I ask is that he often comes over on the yacht, with Mr. Barker, for a game, and of course, if he were poor, I wouldn’t want the stakes to be high, you see.”

I thought this was very nice of Mrs. Chandler.

“It would be just as easy to get some one who is rich, and not waste Mr. Selby’s time. But men are so thoughtless. The Commodore is worse than a child about money. In fact, as he says, he couldn’t run a yacht if money did not slip through his fingers mighty easy. And the Doctor, having been born with a golden spoon in his mouth—the Chicago Stirlings and New York Dwinelles, you know—does not realize that playing for dollars is any more than playing for beans. He’s such an idealist.”

I must have looked surprised, for she added:

“He really does live in the clouds; he studied to be a doctor and graduated, but not being obliged to stay at home and practise, he’s able to travel with us as the physician for the yacht. I’m telling you all this to show you why I am the only one on the *Gelda* with any idea of economy, or the value of money.”

We had reached Mrs. Chandler’s room and I gave a comprehensive glance from her gold toilet articles, to the exquisite gown Yone was mending, and laughed.

Mrs. Chandler laughed, too. "Well, by comparison——" she said deprecatingly. "Aren't these pretty?"

She had opened a drawer and she handed me a pair of pink silk garters, with the most fascinating buckles. Each one was a tiny slipper, made of diamonds, rubies, and sapphires, with a string of diamonds, ending in little jewelled tassels, as though the slippers had come untied.

Mrs. Chandler seemed pleased with my enthusiasm and confided in me that she was crazy to have them made into a pendant, or a pin, but the Commodore wouldn't let her; he said they looked too much like an advertisement for a shoe store. But, as they had been given her before she ever met him, there was no excuse for such flagrant jealousy.

Yone was just putting the last stitches in the gown and as she finished, she looked up with the pleased expression of a good child, conscious of its own merit.

"*Pau*," she announced with calm satisfaction.

Pau was a common meeting ground between all nationalities in Hawaii; it was used to express any and every degree of finish. Yone evidently considered her sewing for the day completed, and she waited expectantly. Mrs. Chandler was examining her gown, so she didn't notice Yone, as she stood patiently, outlined against the portière like a big doll in a show window. Her shining black hair was ornamented with shell combs, and a bright pink arti-

ficial rose, fastened in front, vied in color with her round, frankly rouged cheeks and painted lips.

“Me go,” she suggested gently.

And when Mrs. Chandler nodded assent, she trotted off as fast as her tight *kimono* and gorgeous brocade *obi*, that almost overpowered her with its size, would let her.

“They’re all the same,” said Mrs. Chandler, with a sigh. “Valerie, my last French maid, was a belle, too. But at least the Japanese maids are safe; they can’t gossip.”

“Oh, Mrs. Chandler,” I cried, “you’ve no idea how they talk! They’re so curious, and they are inveterate chatter-boxes; if you let them they’ll tell you——”

Mrs. Chandler turned quickly. “But, they don’t half understand,—they can’t tell what they don’t know; they——” She paused and laughed lightly. “Well, they are interesting as types anyway; and Yone, at least, can sew. It’s really neater than it was originally. The French go in for results only; their sewing is atrocious.”

“But oh, the result!”

“You need it in New York.” Mrs. Chandler spoke feelingly. “There’s so much competition there. Of course it makes it worth while, but really you have to lie awake nights, if you want to make a hit. You can’t just dress there; you have to produce an effect, or else you would never be noticed.”

Mrs. Chandler was sitting on her bed, swinging her pretty feet. I had never seen a woman with such a variety of unusual, and fascinating slippers. To-day they were an odd combination of white canvas and kid, cut low to show the instep, with crossed straps that extended as high as boots, and the little pink roses, embroidered on her white silk stockings, showed in each opening.

“I used to wish sometimes that I was a type,” continued Mrs. Chandler, “and then I could have worked up to some peculiarity of style. But, when you are only plain American, competing with a crowd, as like as pease in a pod, except for being fair, or dark——”

“Mrs. Kapua was a sensation in New York,” I hastened to say. “Whenever she went into a restaurant, every one turned and looked at her. They thought she was a Spanish beauty, until the newspapers wrote her up as a Hawaiian Princess.” I found myself feeling quite pleased, and excited, to think that the Islands could compete.

“She must have looked stunning there—so unusual! Well, we can’t all be types; we have to arrive by different roads. I used to go driving every afternoon with an intimate friend of mine. Her first name was Topaz—so effective, isn’t it? She was a beauty, a brunette. Prince ‘Rolly’ of Bavaria, used to be perfectly devoted to her, until he met some Italian dancer with a temperament. Topaz was statuesque. We were the greatest

friends, but her chum called her 'The Foil,' one day, because somehow I looked so fair beside her. And as 'The Foil,' she got to be known. Awfully complimentary to me of course; it gave me the Star part and centre of the stage, so to speak. That was the end of our intimacy, naturally. *Voila, ma chère.*"

Mrs. Chandler shrugged her shoulders and went over to the mirror to fluff up her bronze hair, which gave me a chance to try and point a moral. Of course I pointed it to myself and, if there was any, I decided it lay between the test of friendship and the road to success. No one would ever have suspected Prince Rolly, whoever he might be, in that connection.

"Help yourself to anything you want,—powder, hair-pins——"

"May I just smell this?" I asked, taking the glass stopper out of a big bottle of greenish-hued perfume. "Oh, isn't it delicious! I've often envied you the perfume you use."

I turned the bottle; the label was torn off, just a piece remaining to show that it had been there. And I concluded that Mrs. Chandler was wise to keep such a sweet scent for her own individual use. Whatever its name, I was sure that it had never come to Honolulu before.

"Shall we go up on deck?" Mrs. Chandler proposed. "I really think we'd better rescue Mrs. Spotfield."

When we got near enough to the players, I

thought it certainly was time to rescue Mrs. Spotfield, for it was plain that there was murder in the heart of Mr. William Barker. He was losing, and had been losing. His lips were one straight line; and Mrs. Spotfield was prattling gaily in his ear and reminding him that she was his Mascot.

Mrs. Chandler had guessed the situation with surprising accuracy.

My, but cards are revealing! They certainly teach the game in the truest, if the most slangy, sense of the term.

Mrs. Kapua's beauty was marred only by her mouth which, in repose, suggested a quality almost rapacious. It gave a hint now of an aroused passion—not greed of money, so much as a desire to win.

But the Commodore was defeating her ruthlessly, and enjoying it openly. His gallantry had not stood the test; he could not forget the game for the woman; he too had the card player's eager desire to win and his mastery of the game was all that occupied his mind. The money was nothing to him and his disregard of it was apparent; he scarcely heard the surmises as to whether he was ahead a couple of hundred dollars; of course they were no more to him than a couple of hundred cents.

The Doctor might be as wealthy a man, but I could believe that he took a keen interest in the amount at stake. He suggested a terrier that had just shaken a mouse to death. He had held the

best cards in the last three hands and he had enjoyed his power none the less because of the certain defeat of an opponent weaker than himself.

Billy Barker looked an Irish policeman about to arrest an English suffragette. All this was in his upper lip.

“Well, by Jove,” said the Commodore, at last, “I’ll be embarrassed if this keeps on!”

He reminded me of a matinee idol, conscious of his success, yet trying to be modest in the face of applause. I had never seen the Commodore embarrassed, but of course he didn’t like to have his guests leave so large a sum of money on the yacht. I could understand that.

“Just one more rubber eh and then I’m *pau*.”

Mrs. Kapua’s voice was as sweet and full of music as usual, but part of her lazy charm was gone. I watched her, as she played, and I made up my mind that I would never be a rival of Mrs. Kapua. She liked the Commodore, she admired his bold, breezy manner, she thought him handsome, his fine physique appealed to her, and she loved a sailor.

But, Mrs. Kapua is used to a complete subjugation. To rule absolutely is her inheritance. She is always personal, and perhaps the Commodore had never been as impersonal with her before. She is inconsequent; maybe she thought he should throw away his hand in her favor, or at least pretend to be unhappy over his success. One thing was sure; the Commodore would have to make amends.

She rose and smoothed down her gown. Billy Barker pushed back his chair and forgot his troubles. He looked at Mrs. Chandler and returned her smile. The Doctor was counting the score.

Yone toddled along the deck, a festive bit of Japan, as the rays of the setting sun lit up her gay coloring.

“Me find paper,” she said to the Commodore. And she looked at him with her child-like, pleased smile. She handed him an open sheet of foolscap.

Mrs. Chandler glanced over at her maid with much the same expression as that of the mother of an *enfant terrible*. She left Mr. Barker in the middle of a sentence.

The Commodore looked simply furious. He towered over little Yone and I thought he was going to strike her.

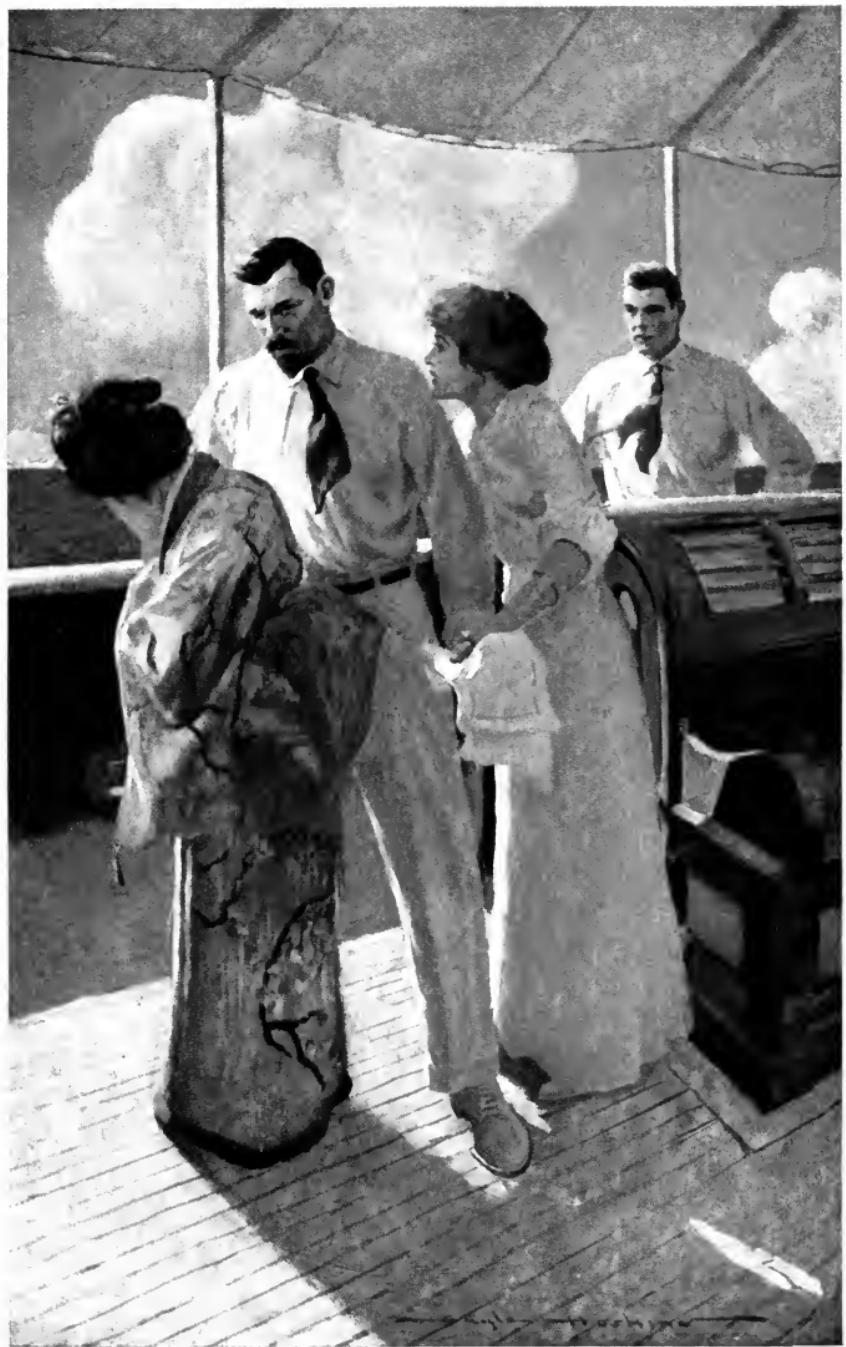
“Damn little Japanese fool!” he muttered to Mrs. Chandler. “I wish you’d discharge her.”

“Oh, aren’t you ungrateful!” exclaimed Mrs. Chandler. “You didn’t see that these are the Tiffany designs you lost! And that good Yone has found them for you.” She put her hand on her husband’s arm.

The Commodore turned to me and said savagely: “I can’t stand that make-up.”

After a few moments, the Doctor came forward with the score.

“I’ve counted it three times,” he said. “Any one want to look it over?”



HE TOWERED OVER LITTLE YONE AND I THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO STRIKE HER

His eyes glanced like a billiard ball in response to the brilliant stroke of a practised hand. They hit all points and finally the paper in the Commodore's hand. He came a step nearer and looked at it with frowning intensity.

"I've been hunting for that," the Doctor held out his hand. "It's mine."

As the Commodore didn't make a motion to give it to him, he added grimly: "And they're the safest germs we have; they're only on paper."

The Commodore handed the sheet to me: "Microbes, or jewels?" he questioned with a laugh.

I looked at the drawings, while the others were settling the score. All the indefinite marks and wriggles seemed to converge at last into stars; small stars and big ones, all sizes and shapes. It looked like a study in astronomy to me.

"I'll send you my check, Commodore," said Mrs. Kapua.

"Mrs. Chandler, little rascal, takes all my winnings and makes me pay her half my losses besides." The Commodore's voice and smile were fondly indulgent. "Oh, I'm a hen-pecked husband, I must admit."

Mrs. Chandler laughed. "On the whole, I make more when you lose."

The Commodore made a playfully threatening gesture towards her, and she dodged.

"Well, I'm out of luck, so single blessedness for me!" cried Billy Barker.

"If we could have played a while longer eh, I'd have come out ahead of you, Commodore," murmured Mrs. Kapua.

He turned to her and said something in an undertone. And Mrs. Kapua showed her beautiful teeth in a half smile.

I leaned over the side of the yacht to catch the breeze that blew cool, and refreshing, over the mountains and across the *Gelda's* deck. The launch, awaiting us, was bobbing up and down on the waves. The sky was gorgeous with the flaming tints of sunset. The sun, a huge, red ball lying low in the Heavens, lit up the *California*, near-by, shone on the ships about the Harbor, sparkled softly on the waters, bathing Honolulu, her hills and her valleys, the cocoanut trees along the shores and the house tops farther in, with the rosy glow that comes before the twilight.

And I thought of Frank. How soon would he be sailing on these same dancing waters; he ought to be starting now.

The Commodore and Mrs. Chandler hospitably invited us all to dine, but no one could stay. And we reached the dock just as the short twilight faded into night.

IX.

MRS. THORNTON said I was an angel of mercy, but I realized that I had been too conscientious, and I think that was why I did not beam at the compliment. But what could I do? It is our boast in Hawaii that we live as one big family, always ready to share our joys and sorrows, and when Mrs. Thornton telephoned me that she had a dinner on hand for the author Hugo Basilton, that her cook had walked off without warning, and that there were fourteen people bidden to eat at half-past seven that evening, and she couldn't, or wouldn't, put them off, and oh, she was in such *pilikia* (trouble) and if she had it to do over again she would make it a breakfast, any way, and would I come and help her, I naturally replied that I would.

When I arrived at Mrs. Thornton's house, I heard her anguished explanation of a situation that might at least be termed trying.

"Mura, my cook, asked me almost every time I entered the kitchen who my guests were to be. At first I paid no attention, but then I began to wonder why he wanted to know. When I questioned him, he said something about number one dinner, number two dinner, and number three dinner, and I found, to my horror, that he had grades. Now, just imagine! His number one dinner was in honor of any government representatives, number two for any

one in the merchant class, and number three—for the missionaries! Do you blame me for losing my temper? With the Stowes and the Elkins invited, I knew we were in for a number three dinner. I gave Mura a piece of my mind, and he politely took his leave."

Poor Mrs. Thornton was almost ready to cry. She brightened up, however, when I suggested calling in Mrs. Probyn, a lady in reduced circumstances, who had turned a taste for culinary art into a means of livelihood.

"Mrs. Probyn can bring a salad and curry," I said cheerfully; "that disposes of two courses, and then you can buy ice-cream, and have canned soup, and——"

But Mrs. Thornton had already ordered her carriage.

"We will bring her back with us," she said. "Everything is comparatively plain sailing now. I never would have thought of Mrs. Probyn; she is so new, and Honolulu never had a caterer before; it is hard to get used to such bliss. I would have given the dinner up when Mura basely deserted, but one does not get a chance to entertain a Hugo Basilton every day, you know. Have you read his last book? It has made a tremendous hit. But really at times I think I'll never entertain again; it is such a struggle. And does Mrs. Probyn make good curry? Curry is such a stylish dish for strangers. It is a revelation too. When they go home they are never satisfied again with a dash of

curry powder shaken in raw. Oh, is that you, Ah Lung? What you want? Cream? All right, I bring by'n'by."

We got into the carriage and drove off. Mrs. Thornton's eyes were shining and she was all animation.

Mrs. Probyn was standing at her gate as we stopped, and after entering into a voluble explanation, Mrs. Thornton added:

"I have only my yard boy in the kitchen; he says he can cook; he's so ambitious, but ambition doesn't insure success, does it, Mrs. Probyn?"

In Mrs. Probyn's face was the light of a steadfast resolve.

"I am going on a picnic this morning, to be gone all day, Mrs. Thornton," she said, and her voice held a pleased note of anticipation. "I am sorry I can't help you. Oh, please don't mention money! I know you would be willing to pay me double, but I gave up a picnic last week to oblige Mrs. Fenwick, who wanted me to make sandwiches for a tea, and I have regretted it ever since. So I am sure you will understand that it is quite impossible. Some other time I will be glad to help you out, if I am not invited anywhere. But let me suggest a good cook who might be willing to go to you. His name is Kiomoto, and you will find him at the Japanese church. I can recommend him, I assure you. Good morning." And Mrs. Probyn cordially bowed and disappeared.

We turned and drove down the street.

"And she is doing this to pay off the mortgage on her house, and to hold on to three hundred shares of assessable sugar stock!" Mrs. Thornton muttered further and pointed remarks; they didn't point skyward; Mrs. Probyn never could have reached heaven on them.

"Well, we will secure the Jap, any way," I said soothingly, and a moment later Kiomoto was bowing and scraping before us, with indrawn breaths hissing, *à la* Japanese, in proportion to an excess of civility.

"Yes, no can come; very sorry, no can," he said between his bows and breaths. "To-night six Christian gentlemen come dinner. Very sorry."

Expostulations and bribes followed from Mrs. Thornton.

"Yes, no can," reiterated Kiomoto. "You please excuse; very sorry. To-night come six Christian gentlemen."

"I'm something of a Christian myself," asserted Mrs. Thornton, with heroic hope.

I recalled her late pointed remarks about Mrs. Probyn, and reflected that the six Christian gentlemen could not need a good cook as did Mrs. Thornton.

But Kiomoto's firmness was equalled only by his suavity of manner. We left him bowing, scraping, hissing, and satisfied.

The situation was hopeless; there was nothing left but to go home and cook. In the cheerfulness

of ignorance, and the comfort of a cooling breeze created by rapid driving, I offered to do the cooking. And Mrs. Thornton seemed grateful, if not confident.

“We will stop for some bonbons and have them at least,” she said.

As we reached the candy store we met Commodore Chandler, immaculate in white duck. He was very handsome in his bold, devil-may-care style. He raised his hat and greeted us cordially, and I thought, as he stood there, that his photograph taken just then would certainly do for a dashing buccaneer.

“We are looking forward to this evening with so much pleasure, Mrs. Thornton,” he said politely.

And Mrs. Thornton refrained from telling him that she did not dare look forward.

While we were waiting for the candy to be put up I went behind the counter to look at some fancy boxes that attracted me with their gay coloring. One of them had an envelope fastened to it addressed: “*Mrs. Kapua.*”

I couldn’t help wondering if the Commodore was responsible for the generous five pounds, or more, that it must have contained.

“We will just get the cream and hurry home,” said Mrs. Thornton as we got in the carriage again.

“All out of cream, Mrs. Thornton,” said the clerk cheerily. “You won’t find any in town to-day. I’ve sent around to try.”

We drove home in silence, and got into *holokus*. I remembered that Mrs. Thornton had often declared—to the exasperation of those of us less conscientious—that she never wore a *holoku* outside of her bedroom. She explained that since the tourist would insist upon calling our graceful gown a Mother Hubbard, just because he could pronounce it, that settled it for her. It was not fair that we should have a clumsy Mother Hubbard reputation spread abroad. Mrs. Thornton had made up her mind that she would rather be off the map entirely.

And the rest of us had admired her abnegation, while continuing to be comfortable. She evidently intended now to make the occasion fit the crime.

“I’m going to have cucumber salad with the fish,” she announced.

“I’ll dress it,” I rejoined, and I went for the oil.

The yard-boy cook explained that the oil was *pau*.

“*Pau!*” cried Mrs. Thornton. “Why, this morning one new bottle come!”

“All *pau*; lady next door come get.”

“It’s Mrs. Fenwick; she always forgets half her market list; she says I am such a desirable neighbor,” said Mrs. Thornton, and her resignation was almost pathetic.

“I’ll dress it without oil,” I proposed, with considerable temerity.

“Bring cucumbers,” Mrs. Thornton ordered in a subdued tone.

And the yard-boy cook brought them.

“What on earth——” began Mrs. Thornton; her eyes were like saucers. She fell into a chair in an attitude that suggested the third act in a comedy-drama.

In fact, the yard-boy cook, with a contempt for seeds as an article of diet, had scooped out the inside of the cucumbers, and, upon further frenzied inquiry, we learned that he had thrown away the salad-to-be, and preserved the rinds alone.

It was discouraging, beyond a doubt. We went into the *lanai* to cool off and write down the menu, even if it might not materialize. The wisdom of never putting anything down in black and white is questionable. We found it distinctly soothing; everything looked so well.

“Thank goodness Mura did the sweetbreads yesterday,” murmured Mrs. Thornton. “They may curdle when they are warmed up, but at least they are done.”

“Put in a lot of truffles, and they won’t notice trifles,” I said, with a laudable effort to be facetious

Mrs. Thornton cheered up at the idea of truffles, and rushed in to open a can.

I did not have the heart to tell her that there is everything in a name when it comes to truffles; it would never do to call them leather.

“They’re in!” she said coming back. “It’s

wonderful what a touch of black will do; the effect is as *chic* in cooking as it is in one's gowns!"

"Number one: Soup *à la* American," I read. "Number two: Fish *à la* mayonnaise. Number three: Sweetbreads *à la*—"

"So far, so good," said Mrs. Thornton, looking over my shoulder; "but that's all the far, and I am not so sure of the good. Number four: Frozen fruit punch—you and I can do that. But the fillet and curry and salad!"

We sat in gloomy silence. In fact, so lost in thought was I that it startled me when Mrs. Thornton jumped to her feet with a gasp, and rushed across the lawn after a Japanese carrying an apparently innocent bucket. Mrs. Thornton literally fell on his neck by a magnolia tree near the fence, and wrested the bucket from him.

"It was Mrs. Almys borrowing my ice-cream freezer," she explained pantingly, as she mounted the steps of the *lanai*.

"What friendly neighbors you have!" I remarked.

"One has to be friendly when there are no corner groceries," said Mrs. Thornton, with more philosophy than content. "Talking of friends, I have an idea!" she added. "I'll telephone and ask Mrs. Fenwick to make my salad; it's the least she can do to be neighborly; besides, she has the oil, and she can just lend me something to put under a mayonnaise. Mrs. Almys, my left-hand neighbor, has a

good cook, and I'll ask her to roast my fillet. And Mrs. Dean, who lives across the way, is noted for her curry."

She heaved a sigh of relief and went to the telephone.

In fifteen minutes it was all arranged, and we went into the pantry to make the fruit punch. Mrs. Thornton emptied in liqueurs and liquors recklessly, lavishly, and, as she explained, economically, because it happened that Ah Lung was inclined to drink, and a bottle once uncorked was sure to go any way. Then we went into the dining-room to arrange some gorgeous crimson poinciana.

We decorated the table, salted some almonds, got out the best china, and tried to cool off, in between.

It began to look as if Mrs. Thornton's troubles were gradually fading away, when a message to the effect that Miss Stowe was ill, obliged to be absent, etc., etc., started a share of trouble in my direction. Thirteen at table was not to be considered, of course.

And I went home to put on a dinner-gown and a pleasant smile.

I was so tired that the smile was fixed, and I suppose Mrs. Thornton thought I was unsympathetic when she took me into her room and told me that, through a harrowing mistake, she had slaved and suffered in vain over her dinner, for the celebrated Hugo Basilton was in California, and the Basilton in Honolulu was an obscure nephew from

Timbuctoo, or some other place that Mrs. Thornton never touched in her travels.

"I had heard from San Francisco that Hugo Basilton was there," groaned Mrs. Thornton, "and when I saw 'Basilton' on the passenger list I wrote a note to his cousin, Mrs. Dalton, and asked if she and Mr. Dalton and Mr. Basilton would dine with me. They accepted promptly, and I never knew the truth until a few moments ago, when I saw this beardless baby blushing through his introduction. I never liked Mrs. Dalton anyway, and she is more—more so—than ever to-night; she has on a light pink waist with a black skirt. And just think how we worked all day for this! I don't see how you can smile."

I didn't explain, but I felt that I had missed my vocation; I should have been a ballet dancer; my legs might have been weak but my smile would have compensated.

The dinner went off beautifully, except perhaps in spots. It was really wonderful how Mrs. Thornton kept her self-possession when Commodore Chandler's soup effervesced. He sat between Mrs. Thornton and me and he was dashing salt into his soup recklessly, when it bubbled up in a manner to discompose any ordinary housekeeper. Of course I realized, at once, that the bottle of table salt and the fruit salts, for cooling the blood, must have got mixed. We all bottle our salt and our gloves at the Beach,

I glanced at Mrs. Thornton. Her expression was tranquil, but I know she did not feel really easy until the salt went off and dessert came on.

The most successful dishes, I must say, were the fillet, curry, and salad. Neighbors are a blessing, after all, though sometimes in disguise.

“Hugo Basilton is going to Japan on the next through steamer and he is going to stop over.” Mrs. Thornton said to me, “I’ll have a breakfast for him. A week from Sunday, at one; will you come? And will you, Frank?”

Frank had dropped in after dinner, with two or three other men. He accepted, and I still smiled, as I answered: “Yes.”

Ah Lung approached his mistress with his soft-footed tread and whispered something to her.

Her face fell and she turned to us. “Goodness! I told Suki to hire some *geisha* girls, and I forgot all about them. Isn’t this a waste? I wish that inexperienced Basilton infant would elope with one of them; he’s too young to go home by himself.”

But at least while the *geishas* went through their series of posturings, I could relax. The *lanai* was a delight to the eye with its softly shaded lanterns and tall palms waving lightly in the breezes that blew over the big magnolia tree, and reached us in desultory whiffs of delicious fragrance.

One of the *geishas* played the *samisen* and sang, while the other two gave their pantomime illustration of the story, keeping perfect time to the simple

notes. Their *kimonos* were of steel gray silk and their handsome *obis* were of exquisitely blended hues. Their fluttering *kimono* sleeves and quivering fans, illustrating the fluttering of a butterfly, was followed by other portrayals in turn, the rippling of the waves, the flight of birds, the mist on the mountains, the snow, the moon, favorite and familiar subjects of the Japanese muse.

All went well until the Commodore began to grow enthusiastic. Of course it enlivened things a bit, but it did not suit the unemotional dance, nor my happily restful state.

“Can’t you just see the falling leaves of autumn!” he cried.

I could not. But the others recognized them; or else their manners were better than mine.

The Commodore sprang to his feet. “Brava, bravissima!” he cried,—for all the world like a box-holder at the Opera, “Mrs. Thornton, this is delightful;—it carries me straight back to Japan. Now this,—this is the swaying of the pine trees. Oh, we simply must keep them going!”

He took from his pocket a greenback, and smoothing it out, he began to wrap it around a coin.

“Oh, Commodore!” cried Mrs. Thornton, laying a restraining hand on his arm. “Really that is too much,—now please——”

Mrs. Dalton grew quite excited and the youthful Basilton’s eyes were round with wonder and awe.

The Commodore laughed, but after a few words

with Mrs. Thornton, he returned the bill, at last, to his pocket.

“Don’t you think it’s about time he got that hundred dollars changed into fives; he’d get rid of it easier,” whispered Frank in my ear.

When the *geishas* departed, I saw no reason why I should stay any longer; the evening was really over, but Commodore and Mrs. Chandler showed no intention of leaving, and young Basilton had not eloped. So I told Mrs. Thornton I would slip off without saying goodnight.

“I’m getting tired of this,” said Frank, on the way home.

“Society is strenuous,” I observed.

“I don’t mean that, but the outlook grows worse. There’s no chance of sugar going up this year. It’s all very well for the Thorntons, and Mrs. Kapua, and the rest, to groan and talk of their incomes being cut in half; what’s the difference when they can live in affluence on the other half. Mrs. Thornton could splurge for a couple of years on the worth of her diamond sunburst alone. Billy Barker has lost two or three little fortunes at cards lately, but he will probably more than make up his losses in the stocks the Commodore has let him in on; some mining stock in which he holds the controlling interest. He’s taken a fancy to Billy and let him in on the ground floor, although he said he had promised friends in London all he could spare, without surrendering the control. But anyway, Billy

would never miss the money that's gone in gambling."

"Oh, when we are rich, here in Hawaii, we *are*; there's no doubt of that," I said, "who won the fortunes?"

"Commodore Chandler."

"Of course, as he doesn't need money. He's such a good player though. I watched him Wednesday afternoon, when we were on board."

"You didn't play?"

"Not I; not with those experts!"

"But who did play?" asked Frank.

"Mrs. Kapua was the only woman, and as there was no one else to play, except Billy Barker, and the Commodore, Mrs. Chandler suggested the Doctor to make the fourth."

"She frequently does, I hear," murmured Frank.

"She seems good-hearted; I suppose she thinks the Doctor is too much alone."

"By the way," said Frank abruptly, "why don't you get the Chandlers to give you their photographs to add to your collection?"

"I will," I assented, as the dashing Commodore and his pretty wife rose before me.

"Who knows when Joe Elkins will be around to call again!" he added.

I laughed, for I had confided to Frank that whenever Joe Elkins, who had no small talk in his repertoire, came to call, the photographs made conversation, while otherwise there would have been but a communion of souls.

"I must get them!" I said with conviction.

There was a pause, and then a deep sigh from Frank.

"You mustn't be blue, Frank," I ventured softly. "Everything is sure to brighten up soon. Oh, how I wish Mr. Thornton would retain you in his suit against Leiilima!"

"No possibility of that," muttered Frank. "I've got to decide in the next month about going to Japan. I can't dilly-dally much longer, or the chance will be gone."

We walked along in silence. About us, all was peaceful and quiet; the air was like velvet; the breeze was a caress; even the moon shone softly through hazy clouds; it did not seem reasonable for one's feelings to be disturbed in the midst of nature's harmony. I felt powerless to comfort, to advise; my arguments had been futile; I had nothing to say.

We reached the gate and walked slowly up the driveway. I had a distinct consciousness that girls were hampered. I almost longed to be a widow—until I recalled whose widow. When we reached the *lanai*, I turned and looked at Frank. Perhaps if I'd been a widow, I could not have done more. He grasped my hand and held it tight; in fact it was a squeeze.

Abruptly he left me. And as I watched him go through the garden, I reflected that a widow might have met his glance at the gate, with a moonlight walk—before her.

X.

MRS. THORNTON's breakfast set the ball rolling for the real Hugo Basilton. It was something of a shock to learn that he had been married a year. In fact, Adrienne Singlee had shown an interest in his coming that almost savored of disloyalty to the Navy. For Hugo Basilton writes love scenes to distraction,—and a conclusion in stars, none other being permissible. Of course, as Adrienne said, the printer made the stars, but she was sure Hugo Basilton encouraged him. It's true that ever since the first lisping of "Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are," the erotic writers have kept us still wondering.

Mrs. Thornton declared that men of genius should never marry; she said this might not be original, but a single man is so much easier to entertain.

There was no doubt that Hugo Basilton must see a native feast, and Mrs. Thornton persuaded Mrs. Kapua to have one in his honor under her famous old *hau* trees on the beach, where chiefs and chiefesses had revelled in the past.

Mrs. Kapua was more than willing; the author was good looking and had an attraction possible only to a man of the world. His mannerisms most of the women found fascinating. His smile was sudden and was always preceded by an expression of

deep gravity; it brightened up his face into an unexpected radiance that was quite fetching. Also, he had a lock of coal black hair which fell over his forehead continually, necessitating a toss of his head to throw it back into position. This became exasperating, or captivating, according to one's credulity, or the state of one's nerves.

The *luau* was a regular old-timer, except that there was no *hula hula*. Mrs. Kapua could not stand the usual *hula kui* exhibition and, being undeniably clever, she knew how to gauge her guests. Hugo Basilton was only one of them; the rest were going to stay,—and remember. We sat on the ground with our legs crossed, in a manner trying in the extreme to any one past the suppleness of childhood. The women looked pained and spoke of the ecstasy of throwing aside conventionality; the men squirmed and referred to history and the comfortable couches about the festive boards of the Romans. The table-cloth of ferns and the yellow *ilima leis*, calabashes of *poi*, tropical fruits, and gorgeous masses of flowering vines, the heavy scent of the *maile* leaf, the plaintive singing of native boys in the background, the murmur of the surf beyond, the soft light of colored lanterns, were all calculated to arouse the great author to a frenzied reach for adjectives, and a new book.

Both he and his wife praised the viands, while eating sparingly thereof; this was usual,—native dishes look suspicious. To explain to them

the process by which the root of the *taro* plant was converted into *poi*, a delicious and nutritious food, loved by all Islanders, native and foreign alike, could not make them perceive any virtue in what they frankly acknowledged was to them but a sour paste, unappetizingly gray in color and sticky in consistency.

Mr. Basilton, it is true, did begin to take notice when we pointed out the romance possible in one calabash of *poi* between two congenial spirits. And when Mrs. Kapua dipped in three of her tapering fingers and, with a dexterous twist of her wrist, twirled the *poi* into a neat lump around them which she conveyed to her mouth, he bravely tried to follow her example and look pleasant the while. Mrs. Kapua tactfully assured him that *poi* was an acquired taste, and he did not try again. After that, he and Mrs. Basilton seemed to think they had done their whole duty when they tasted and learned to pronounce *koele palau*, which feat was accomplished when they had learned that the ingredients were only mashed sweet potato, mixed with the juice of grated cocoanut. They had evidently heard of the *poi* dogs which, in the past, on a diet restricted to the fattening *poi*, had been converted into a choice delicacy for the feast, and they were going to take no chances. But the rest of us ate, in native fashion, with our fingers and considerable relish, not a whit constrained by the politely suppressed, but unmistakable, wonder of the strangers.

Mrs. Kapua's ancestors had not known chairs until the missionaries came and her position on the ground was one of careless repose. She did not have to keep moving so that her legs wouldn't go to sleep. She certainly had the advantage of us, all through. She looked stunning in a gown that was the color of her ruby pendant, a carnation *lei* wreathed saucily in her black hair, just above her brow. Over her head a handsome Hawaiian girl waved a *kahili*, with the rhythmic motion of a trained retainer.

The charms of the other women paled by comparison; even Mrs. Thornton, her good looks enhanced by her exquisite diamond sunburst, and Mrs. Chandler in pale pink with crush roses the color of her cheeks, were almost insignificant with our dashing hostess to outshine them.

Perhaps it was the first time the Commodore had seen Mrs. Kapua dressed in anything but white; although undeniably her color, it could not produce this effect. Mrs. Kapua seemed unconscious of his gaze, but she had not put on that red gown for nothing. The Commodore was not going to have smooth sailing with her, not to the point of monotony, at any rate.

It was quite interesting to watch Adrienne Sing-lee, for it was a study to see how she could keep one eye on Hugo Basilton and the other on Mrs. Kapua, without becoming cross-eyed in the effort.

Mrs. Kapua is regarded as a *kahuna* by the superstitious of the community, and this means that

she has supernatural powers in more than one direction. It is queer what a long residence in the Islands will do for us; I acknowledge that I would not struggle against Mrs. Kapua when she puts on her red gown. *Kahunas* are bad enough at any time, but in red they are in working clothes, so to speak. I, of course, don't believe that Mrs. Kapua can "pray to death," but in the face of evidence I can but think she can "pray to love."

We had watched the case of Lieutenant Sanford, who was only one among many. Lieutenant Sanford was engaged to a girl at home, and never was a man more oblivious to the charms of all others. Mrs. Kapua saw him and his six feet two of blond good looks. She put on her red gown and sallied forth to conquer. It was on board the *Dragon*. Mrs. Kapua was dancing a waltz, with a *hula* suggestion skilfully modulated to the perfection of grace. She passed Lieutenant Sanford five times. The first time he was apparently unseeing. The second, he saw her. The third, he regarded her impassively. The fourth, he gazed. The fifth, he stared. Then he asked for an introduction, and from that moment Lieutenant Sanford was Mrs. Kapua's slave.

It scarcely seems fair that Mrs. Kapua should inherit the *kahuna* power while the rest of us are endowed with only human powers of attraction. But Mrs. Basilton was serenely unconscious of any

material danger. Her open blue eyes met a half-veiled glance of Mrs. Kapua's with an equanimity which betrayed the fact that she herself preferred blondes. Mrs. Basilton was pretty, very pretty. Her eyes were like violets until, in a shadowed light, they suggested purple pansies. Her skin was dazzlingly fair; her hair waved softly in reddish-gold masses. She wore a white lace gown cut off at the shoulders in a way that might have been daring, had not her shoulders testified to the reason.

"I had no idea that Honolulu was so gay," said Mrs. Basilton. "Really, New York is dead socially in comparison with this." Her intonation was due west; her twang each point of the compass would be sure to disclaim, twangs not being popular. "Mr. Basilton and I have travelled everywhere, but I never got into a place where one needs so many gowns," she declared.

Everybody beamed; the social life of Honolulu we feel to be its little all. And nobody interrupted Mrs. Basilton with the information that Honolulu, in the hope of being written up, had striven for the entertainment of the famous author with every expectation that his next love scene would be entirely tropical and forced to end in stars.

"In fact," added Mrs. Basilton, "I haven't a thing to wear!"

There was a chorus of protest from the women; the men gazed at the fair prattler's snowy shoulders and didn't say what they looked.

Mr. Basilton tossed the lock of hair from his broad forehead. "The wife of Basilton needs no clothes," he said with infinite gravity.

We waited for him to add, "Metaphorically speaking," which might have relieved the tension, but neither the great author nor his wife seemed to think this necessary, so from any one else it would surely have been superfluous. Mr. Basilton tossed the lock once more from his brow and laughed.

"Mrs. Basilton and I went to a dinner before we left New York," he resumed, "and at Mrs. Basilton's seat she found this little squib:

"The wives of great men all remind us
They can do a thing or two,
And, departing, leave behind them
Footprints just a few—and new."

Inordinate laughter greeted the squib.

"Is it true, Mr. Basilton, that an author must feel emotions to write them?" asked Mrs. Kapua, leaning forward and lightly touching his arm.

Each liquid tone of her voice was a caress; her touch—we all know the Hawaiian touch—supple, soft, lingering. Mr. Basilton looked into the depths of her dark eyes, one moment inscrutable, the next guileless, as though for him she allowed the veil to drop that hid her soul. We all know the Kapua road to conquest, though we cannot grasp the side paths of *kahunaism*.

"In a measure," replied the Great and Only Basilton. "I, for instance, am wofully the slave

of my moods. You remember the ball in the eighth chapter of my last novel? Would you believe that I had to put on my dress-suit before I could catch the pulsation, the intensity, that throbs in heart-beats to glowing undertones of music?"

Nobody answered until Adrienne Singlee murmured, "I must read it again." Her tone showed that she felt she had more to grasp.

"I am too restricted; I never could write," sighed Mrs. Kapua. "But you—you feel that love is limitless."

This implied that she didn't, but as Hugo Basilton himself has written—though perhaps in more chastened language—: "Only she who goes the limit, talks of love's limitations."

"Shall we go down on the Beach?" continued our hostess, rising from her seat with an ease unlike the usual scramble necessary to get up from the ground. "Mr. Basilton, I want you to see the glory of our moonlight at Waikiki."

"Ah, Hawaii, Paradox of the Pacific!" exclaimed Hugo Basilton. "Moonlight and leprosy, waving palms and bubonic plague; still art thou justly called Paradise!"

And, looking down into Mrs. Kapua's upturned eyes, he sauntered off with her.

The rest of us, as one, stole a glance at Mrs. Basilton. And in her absolute tranquillity, it was plain to see that she still thought the blonde mightier than the brunette.

So, as all was well with her, and I had started to hunt for trouble, I continued the search and looked for the Commodore.

He had won on the *Gelda*, but next time he had a game with Mrs. Kapua, he would be apt to remember that two could play it. However, he stopped biting his moustache and leaned over his wife to speak to her. In a few minutes, they went inside together.

Billy Barker came over to me. With an exaggerated carelessness that prepared me for mischief, he recalled to my mind the fact that I had asked him for the address of a Chinese cook. And I knew better than to dispute his assertion. I only hoped that no one would stop to think that my cook was Japanese.

I took the paper he handed me, and I read:

Wives of great men should remind us
 Hubby's work is quite sublime,
And remaining, keep this going,
 He can stand it all the time.

“It really did not take so long to get it as you'd think,” murmured Billy.

And I never saw him look more pleased. He returned to Mrs. Spotfield's side.

Such is the informality of an entertainment at Waikiki, and a native feast above any other, that a hostess is free.

In a careful undertone, Frank remarked that as Mrs. Kapua was free and Hugo Basilton was easy,

the result was a rare exemplification of congeniality.

So it was some time before they returned. When they did, they found us in the *lanai*, enjoying comfortable chairs. Hugo Basilton sought his wife's side and murmured something about "types" and "local color." And Mrs. Basilton ruffled her hair into a further study in disorder and ravishing Titian tints.

"It's too bad she's so dark," she rejoined in a low voice. "Couldn't you put some gold lights in her hair when you write her up, Hugo?"

The Great and Only Basilton looked inscrutable.

"I'll do my best to make her possible," he said.

Mrs. Chandler and the Commodore strolled out through the blind doors opening into the *lanai*.

"We have been enjoying Mrs. Kapua's collection of calabashes," said the Commodore.

"Ah, I have wanted a chance to speak to you, Mrs. Chandler!" Hugo Basilton stepped towards her and bowed low as he spoke, and Mrs. Chandler showed her pretty teeth in a gratified smile. "Your face is very familiar," he added. "I cannot rest until I recall where we have met."

Mrs. Chandler's face fell; the compliment, of course, was no longer distinct.

"Mrs. Chandler has been in every country," interposed the Commodore. "Perhaps in Egypt——"

"No, I have never been in Egypt. Mrs. Chand-

ler, I throw myself on your mercy ; surely you must remember where or how you have met me ! ”

He did not add, “ Me, Basilton ! ” nor a list of his books.

Mrs. Chandler shook her head and murmured that she had never had the pleasure.

But the author still looked puzzled.

“ I want to see Mrs. Kapua’s calabashes,” said Mrs. Thornton, rising. “ Frank, will you come with me ? ”

“ Allow me,” said the Commodore, gallantly presenting his arm.

Mrs. Thornton slipped her other arm through Frank’s.

“ Don’t you girls wish you were a belle ? ” she laughed, turning as she stepped through the bead portières, held aside by the Commodore.

Her sunburst, I noticed, shone no brighter than her eyes. I never knew a woman with eyes so sparkling as Mrs. Thornton’s ; no wonder diamonds were so becoming to her.

It was rather stupid on the *lanai* after they left. Mrs. Chandler talked of New York’s four hundred and knew the nicknames of the prominent millionaires. Mrs. Basilton’s reminiscences were mostly of the literary set. Her husband spoke little ; he gazed, almost stared, in fact, at Mrs. Chandler, and she met his eye carelessly as she flung a procession of names familiar to Fifth Avenue and Newport at his head.

I sighed with relief as I heard Mrs. Thornton's voice approaching. I had made up my mind to go home, and I kept an eye on the bead portière, so that I could wink discreetly but significantly at Frank. He stepped through first and held the beaded strings aside. Just then the electric lights went out—a pleasant little trick electricity has with us, thanks to monopoly and a weak circuit.

Everybody said, "Oh!" But I said it to myself, and it wasn't "oh." It was exasperating! Frank could not see my wink. Almost instantly the lights went up, and everybody said, "Ah!"

Mrs. Thornton came towards me, laughing. "A great problem is solved!" she cried. "I'm going to choose a tall calabash for my Christmas present from George."

"Why, where is your diamond sunburst?" I exclaimed.

Mrs. Thornton put her hand to her head and looked bewildered.

Everybody was talking and laughing. I had once heard a Honolulu hostess say that she had ceased to care when the lights went out; it made things so informal.

Hugo Basilton, who certainly laid claim to startling originality, called out: "'Where was Moses when the light went out?'" And his hearty laugh rang just as true as though it were the first time this conundrum had ever been perpetrated.

"Don't make a fuss," whispered Mrs. Thorn-

ton to Frank. "But tell George, will you? You and he can help me look for it; I must have dropped it inside."

I went in with them, and we searched for the pin. But in vain. It was nowhere to be found.

Mrs. Kapua was distressed, when told, and warmly sympathetic. But she was confident that the jewels would be recovered; and she begged Mrs. Thornton not to worry.

"I can rely absolutely on my servants; they shall look for your sunburst the very first thing in the morning. I am sure it has rolled in some corner under the furniture. There is no doubt that we will find it."

This was reassuring, and anyway there was nothing further to be done. Mrs. Thornton would not make her hostess uncomfortable, so she assumed a confidence that she could scarcely feel.

Soon after, we left.

"Poor Mrs. Thornton," I said to Frank. "I'm afraid she won't sleep, she is so upset. But there was no use in hunting any more to-night."

"No," said Frank.

"I'm sure the pin will be found to-morrow, in spite of it being strange that anything as big and brilliant should disappear like that."

"Yes," said Frank.

"Wouldn't it be awful if Mrs. Kapua did not know her servants so well! Hard on them, as well as risky for Mrs. Thornton. But, she has had

them for years, except the new cook, and he doesn't count, so there can be no danger, so far as the servants are concerned."

"None; that's so," said Frank.

"There's one thing about us, and that is we have never known anything in Hawaii but petty thefts; we have been fortunate in that."

"Yes indeed," said Frank.

There was not much inspiration for a continuation of the subject and as Frank seemed tired and depressed, we drove the rest of the way home, almost in silence.

"I've been thinking over this Japan business," said Frank. "I've given it up."

A great wave of happiness swept over me.

"The chance of what I might gain there is swallowed up in what I might lose here. I can't go; I can't leave—Honolulu—that's all there is to it."

"I knew you would be true blue," I said, just as I used to when we went to school.

And in a moment Frank said simply: "Good night."

XI.

ADRIENNE SINGLEE said it was a perfect shame that no one had given the Chandlers a moonlight bathing party. And every one agreed with her, and encouraged her to be a hostess and to set a date right then. For Honolulu loves the moonlight and loves the sea. Nowhere does the moon shine with such radiance as in Hawaii, and only Waikiki, with its sandy beach, and widely stretching waters, can be lit into such soft, cool, pale beauty.

The Singlee girls make a specialty of their bathing suits. They were just getting new ones, so we had to wait five nights for the party. They have trim, slim figures, rather on the boyish order, and bathing suits are very becoming to them.

Frank and I were starting rather late, for we had been discussing Mrs. Thornton's lost sunburst.

"It will not be found," declared Frank.

"Frank!" I exclaimed. "Why not? That's too absurd. Surely Mrs. Thornton must have lost it in the house, for I distinctly saw it when she went in with you and Commodore Chandler to see the calabashes."

"Yes," said Frank slowly; "she had it on then."

"Well—well?" My tone was impatient, but Frank did not answer me. "Frank," I said with some warmth, "you either mean something or you don't!" This was certainly a plain statement and

did not seem to call for a reply. At least, there was none. "I shall begin to think *you* took the diamonds if you are so mysterious," I said laughingly.

A dead pause ensued, and I began to feel uncomfortable. At last indignation took possession of me. "I just hate you when you act like this!" I exclaimed. "You evidently have something on your mind, and you either hint at it or keep silent. You don't trust me; we have been friends for years, but you—you treat me like a stranger; not like a friend!"

"We are not friends," said Frank significantly.

"Not friends!" I cried, but my voice did not sound sincere.

"No," said Frank somewhat gloomily; "I am more than a friend to you—you know it, dear. Yet I cannot be more—I cannot say more——"

"Why not?" I began impetuously; it slipped out in spite of me.

"A man has no right to tell a girl he loves her unless he can ask her to marry him," said Frank.

"Any man can ask a girl to marry him," I said tentatively.

"Not always."

"Well, if he isn't secretly married, if he doesn't inherit insanity, or something like that——"

"It doesn't have to go as far as insanity," said Frank. "It would be a selfish brute who would ask a girl to share his poverty."

"Oh, it's the same old story!" I cried impetu-

ously. "A man is the most selfish while persuading himself of his generosity. He never stops to think of a girl's limitations; he never stops to put himself in her place; it never enters his head to think how she must feel—to think how it must seem to sit around and wait. If she cares for him, she wonders and doubts until the wonder becomes a worry, and the doubt an agony, and she must hide both, while he—with the power to act, with the right to speak which has been the privilege of man since the world began—he keeps it all to himself and comforts himself with thoughts—false thoughts—of his generosity and unselfishness. Why can't he tell the girl and let her at least be *in* it, instead of on the outside, like any mere acquaintance? Why can't he tell her and let her have a say in a question that concerns her as much as it does him? Why can't he let her into a decision which means her life as well as his? If she is willing to take the risk, if she is willing to wait—at least, give her the——"

I started violently. Frank had my hand in his and dropped it guiltily.

"It is only the telephone," I said with a gulp.

I went to answer it, and Mrs. Chandler's voice asked if the Comodore was with me, and if she might speak to him.

"Not there!" she exclaimed, when I told her I had not seen him. "Why, he started for your house a couple of hours ago, at least. He left his bathing suit there yesterday when we went to call;

it was done up in a small bundle, and he left it on a chair in the *lanai*, he said. He was to have met me, and I cannot imagine where he can be. I'm not going to wait for him any longer. Will you tell him I'll go straight to the Singles', and meet him there?"

"All right, I'll tell him," I said. "And if he does not come, I'll hunt up the bundle and take it to the Singles' for him. I'm just about to start; yes, I'll leave a message for him; good-by."

As I hung up the receiver, I felt I could never go back to the *lanai* and Frank. My cheeks were blazing! I felt almost as if I had proposed. As I hesitated, I heard the Commodore's voice outside; it was a great relief, and I went out after a moment to give him his wife's message.

"I was detained at the club," he said. "I tried to telephone, but the line was out of order."

"Will you drive to the Singles' with us?" I asked.

The Commodore thanked me and said he would be delighted.

"You dismissed your hack?" This was half a statement and half a question from Frank.

"Hack?" rejoined the Commodore. "Oh, hack—yes, beg pardon, my thoughts wandered for a moment. Yes, the poor old horse was no good, and I got out at the corner. Jove! what a view of the surrounding country this house commands, though!"

I could not find the Commodore's bundle anywhere about the *lanai*, so I called Tumi and asked her about it.

"No see," said Tumi. "Plenty sweep before, plenty clean *lanai*. No see."

"I must have made a mistake and left it somewhere else," said the Commodore.

I offered to lend him a spare bathing suit of my father's, and he seemed most appreciative of the offer. Tumi did it up in her usual deft way, and the Commodore seemed surprised when she handed it to him so quickly.

"Isn't it too early to go?" he suggested.

"Oh, no, we are late!" I replied, and I led the way down the steps to the carriage.

"What is the exquisite scent that always lingers about this *lanai*?" asked the Commodore, pausing.

I explained that it came from the stephanotis vine climbing over the trellis.

"May I have a flower for my buttonhole?" asked the Commodore.

Of course I couldn't say no, but I felt like it; the horses were getting restive, and we were late anyway. I hastily retraced my steps and picked a bunch of the waxy flowers.

"They are a little heavy for a boutonnière," I said, as I handed them to him.

"Don't you think their perfume would be quite perfect if you pinned them on for me?" suggested the Commodore.

I laughed and assured him, as I started to fasten them in, that he had put this very prettily.

“Here is a pin,” said the Commodore, and no sooner had he uttered the words than he dropped it. “How stupid of me!” he exclaimed.

We both hunted for it, but of course it was gone, or the light was too uncertain.

“Could you send for another?” asked the Commodore.

But Tumi was right at hand with one. After all, it had not delayed us more than a moment. I jumped in the carriage and the Commodore slowly followed me, after a polite argument with Frank as to which of my escorts should have the seat beside me. Certainly the Commodore was in no hurry. The horses were nervous from waiting and went like the wind. The Commodore kept saying “Whoa!” as though he owned them. He finally explained that he feared I was nervous. I thought to myself that *he certainly was*. Ahead of us was a hack with a white horse that loomed up in the moonlight very white, and equally slow. In fact it was a tired-out hack horse, and no mistake.

The Commodore uttered an exclamation. “Stop!” he cried. “One of the bathing suits has dropped out.”

“Oh, pshaw! how stupid of Tumi!” I cried. “I told her to put the rug over it.”

“Allow me,” said the Commodore, starting to get out.

But Frank had jumped from the front seat and was back with the bundle in a jiffy.

“Drive fast,” I heard him whisper to Nagasaki.

We were soon passing the carriage with the white horse, and I leaned forward to see who was inside, feeling sure that it must be some one from our neighborhood, bound for the Singlee’s. Coming up from the back, where the carriage lights did not dazzle one, it was easy to distinguish Mrs. Kapua, though she was leaning far back in the corner and almost seemed to be trying to avoid us.

“*Aloha!*” I called out gaily. “Going to the Singlee’s; we’ll meet you there.” And we dashed on.

“Who was it?” asked the Commodore.

“Mrs. Kapua,” I answered. “I wonder why she came up in this direction first—and in a hack, too!”

“Are you sure it was Mrs. Kapua?” asked the Commodore, incredulity in his tone. “It did not look like her to me. Yes? Well, I heard her say one of her horses was lame; that accounts for the hack. Charming woman, really. But, not the only charming, pretty Honolulu belle.”

For a moment I was puzzled, but the Commodore’s bold glance and lowered tone convinced me that I was the only other one, to him. He pressed his foot against mine.

“Let me be your partner in bathing,” he whispered.

"Oh," I protested, "we don't have partners. We—we just go in."

"But may I stay by you?" he persisted. "Surely you don't know how to swim? Let me teach you!"

"Fancy an Island girl not knowing how to swim!" I laughed, but the Commodore did not like to be teased, I could see. He could be a bad enemy, I was sure; whether he would be a good friend or not, I could n't tell, but at least he might be neutral. "But even if I can swim, you could teach me many things perhaps—if you would," I amended.

"May I?" murmured the Commodore as we dashed up to the Singlee steps.

Evidently the Commodore, too, was not "a bigoted married man."

Everybody was in the *lanai* down by the sea, when we got there; the Hugo Basiltons, Mrs. Chandler, the Thorntons, the Mitchells, Mrs. Spotfield, Elsie Stowe, Jo Elkins, Guy Selby, Teddy Skelton and a couple of other middies, Billy Barker—in fact, as he expressed it: "The prizes of the bunch." All the women wore shirtwaist gowns, befitting the informality of the entertainment, and the men were in duck.

"Any news of your diamonds?" I asked Mrs. Thornton.

"Not yet," she said dolefully. "My only consolation is that they were lost indoors."

When Mrs. Kapua arrived she explained the delay that had forced her to keep the party waiting. Her voice was so musical that one didn't care if the reason was off key. She greeted me in her graceful, pretty way.

"I wanted to stop you and get in behind your fast span," she said. "Ah, Commodore, so glad to meet you again! I still remember our last waltz together. All sailors dance so well!"

"Thanks for a very general compliment," responded the Commodore gaily.

Those of us who were going in started for the bath-houses.

"No wonder the Commodore left his hack at the corner!" whispered Frank to me, before he went off with the other fellows.

"Come up to my room and undress," Adrienne proposed. "Then we will go down in our *kimonos*, and come back to dress comfortably, after we've had a shower in the little bath-house. There will be nobody in there, and we can have it to ourselves."

Adrienne was ready first and hurried down to the pier, leaving me to carry our towels to the bath-house. I followed her a few moments later and went slowly over the grass, for there was always danger of a thorn from the algeroba trees.

The lawn, between the shadows of the branching trees, was lit up by the clear rays of the moon. Beyond stretched the waters, dancing, rippling, shimmering, breaking into snowy froth where the

surf thundered, outside the coral reef. I wondered afresh why no tidal waves rose in their might by our peaceful shore. And I recalled Adrienne's explanation that the reef might not stop a wave, but at least "it would weaken it down below." Farther on, I lingered to watch the big breakers as they rolled, and shone, and tossed their crests triumphantly. But their glory was only reflected, after all, and when they sank again way down in the dark hollows, and the mysterious shadows, there were strange whisperings, and sighings, as though they were crying for the moon they had tried so hard to catch. We all have our pet moon and we all cry for it. Frank was no exception of course; and a big case was a radiant possibility.

I turned to the left, where the small bath-house stood. It was dark and evidently unoccupied. I went carefully, almost on tiptoe, for there was likely to be a lot of thorns around where the yard boys neglected to sweep; this was economy of labor, for the other two bath-houses, which were larger, were more often used.

As I reached the door a tall figure stepped out of the shadow, and the Commodore's voice murmured tenderly:

"Are you ready, *Kuu Aloha?*" *

I pressed the electric light button, for which I had been feeling, and he started violently as my eye met his.

* My loved one.

A soft footfall behind made me turn ; it was Mrs. Kapua coming out in her red bathing suit, with red stockings to match, and a red handkerchief tied in a stunning bow on her dark hair.

The Commodore's smile had faded.

"I had just turned out the light," said Mrs. Kapua, in her musical voice. "Come, we will go down to the pier together."

There was one thing certain, and that was that Mrs. Chandler was not worrying over the Commodore. She was busy with Billy Barker. She hesitated on the last step that led from the pier down into the sea, in a bathing suit of heavy black silk, with pale blue bands ; it was very *chic* and becoming. Around her head was tied a pale blue silk handkerchief in a jaunty bow, allowing a few curls to escape on her forehead and about her neck ; a blue sash, tied on one side in a sailor knot, completed a costume that made a picture of her.

The water was like a caress ; one couldn't feel a chill even when first going in. I called to her to join us, but she still hovered on the brink and shivered prettily.

"Mr. Barker is going to help me put on my water-wings, and then I'll come," she said.

But it took a long while to fasten the water-wings, for she stayed on the step all the time and looked like a cute little chorus girl on the stage.

Billy Barker never left her side, preferring his

rôle of guide, adviser, and friend to any sport with old Neptune.

It was a night made for romance; Mrs. Spotfield stood on the pier and looked as if she thought Mrs. Chandler's skirt was too short. Even in the softening moonlight that converted everything into a melting beauty, it was possible to see that she had made a hard and fast resolve; next time she would have a picture suit and keep it dry. To be left alone on the pier with the women while all the men, and Billy Barker, went into the sea, would not be likely to happen again to Mrs. Spotfield.

Adrienne and Céleste Singlee, on the end of the pier, locked arms and walked backward until they stepped off into the sea. This required some nerve and hair that looked well when sleek; the Singlees are blessed alike in each. They dived from the spring-board, turned back somersaults, and were as much at home in the water as fish.

Mrs. Kapua and the Commodore swam out to the raft, where they rested, silhouetted against the sky, most discreetly far apart.

There were really only a few women who went in, as is usually the case at bathing parties—Mrs. Kapua, Mrs. Chandler, Elsie Stowe, the Singlee girls, and I; the rest watched us from the pier and declared it was all very fine while it lasted but too much bother to get dressed again.

The romping, and diving, the shouts, and peals

of laughter, rose above the murmur of the surf, and the splash of the waves on the beach, until those left on shore laughed from very sympathy. The water was so warm that we stayed in longer than usual, but at last we reluctantly came out, and one dripping figure after another sought the bath-houses.

We found cocktails and caviare awaiting us, and a delicious supper followed. Every one was hungry after the swim, and while we were enjoying salads and sandwiches, Frank recalled to my mind a similar function given by the Fenwicks last moon, on a damp south wind night, when the water was cold and the refreshments were iced lemonade and watermelons; it was the wise ones who had refrained on that occasion, for even Christian Science could not withstand "a claim" so sure to ensue.

During one of the rare pauses in the chatting about the *lanai*, Mrs. Mitchell started to tell Hugo Basilton how much she had enjoyed his books and while he was beaming on her, she went on to say that she did not see how any one man could accomplish so much work. She mentioned a couple of her favorites, but although it was true they were written by one man, Hugo Basilton was not the man. And judging by his expression, the author of them was not in his class.

It was a painful moment to the rest of us, though perhaps a proud one to Hugo Basilton, when he disclaimed the authorship of the books. Mrs.

Mitchell was one of the best-hearted women in the world, and no one ever stayed out of patience with her; she always explained her little mistakes as the result of her absent-minded moments, and this seemed to mollify even Hugo Basilton.

Seeing that he had the attention of most of us, he looked ready to talk about his literary productions and opened his mouth, no doubt to do so, but Mrs. Mitchell interposed by turning to Mrs. Thornton and asking her if she had shaken out the gown she had been wearing when she lost her sunburst, as it might easily have got caught in the laces.

Mrs. Thornton assured her that she had not only shaken the gown, but had also turned it inside out to examine the lining.

Mrs. Kapua said she was going to institute a still more thorough search, and that hope was not to be given up yet, by any means.

Hugo Basilton said the circumstances would make a good foundation for a plot and he trusted that some one would write him the real conclusion so that he might see if his own, from the imagination entirely, would not be more convincing.

The Commodore said the author would certainly have a charming heroine to start the story.

And Mrs. Basilton, in an elaborate "tub gown" that without doubt would never be put in a tub, said a heroine in a French costume was a beginning that was sure to appeal.

In fact every one was interested in the mystery

surrounding the lost pin, and Mrs. Mitchell related a wonderful tale about an emerald she had lost and how it was found again after a whole day of agonized searching. At the end, it appeared that the emerald, instead of having been replaced in its case, as usual, had lain on her dressing table, hidden from view by a handkerchief that had been carelessly thrown over it.

The conversation began to drift away from the general discussion, and it was getting so late that we left as soon as supper was over.

I asked Elsie Stowe to drive home with us, as she lived quite near, and while she and Frank talked, I lay back in my corner sleepily, with hazy thoughts of the Commodore and his mislaid bathing suit, and of Mrs. Kapua's fascinating ways.

XII.

I FELT sorry for Mrs. Thornton; she seemed so distressed about her lost pin. She had invited the Hugo Basiltos to go to the Volcano with her, and she declared that her whole trip would be spoiled and she would give anything to be able to back out. They were to sail the next day and there was no hope of her sunburst being found before then.

“It is not only the value of the stones,” she said to me, with her eyes full of tears, “but George gave it to me when baby came; and then—then—and after—I couldn’t wear it at first, but now it seems like a memory of her pure, bright little life. We both of us love it. I’d rather have lost anything else, every jewel I possess!”

“It will be found,” I said, trying to console her. “You are so concerned about it that you don’t look at it from a reasonable point of view. How can it be gone forever when it is somewhere in that house?”

“The servants?” suggested Mrs. Thornton doubtfully.

“Nonsense,” I interrupted firmly. “You know she has had them for years and they are perfectly honest. Moreover there is not one of them who would know the value of the jewels. And how could they dispose of them here in Honolulu? If they tried to sell them, they would at once be found out.”

"That's true," murmured Mrs. Thornton, more brightly. "I won't give up hope yet. Mrs. Kapua will be at the Mitchells' this afternoon; maybe she will have good news for me then; she may be waiting to tell me herself instead of telephoning."

The Mitchells were going to open their new driveway in the afternoon, and we were to be there at about five. The garden was beautiful as we drove up, for the Mitchells made a specialty of flowering trees and vines; it seemed as if they had all bloomed for the occasion, or as if the occasion was because of the bloom. The golden shower hung in gorgeous yellow branches, the poinciana trees, like huge umbrellas, shaded us with tropical crimson clusters, so thick that one could scarce see any green, and farther along riotous vines of magenta bougainvillæa climbed over an arbor that led to the house. Brilliant crotons edged the driveway, and branching banana and palm trees were scattered about the wide stretches of lawn.

From one side of the open gate to the other was tied a thick, heavy rope of pink carnations, and every one came in by the foot-path near by. A *koa* table under the shade of the poincianas down by the gate held a large punch-bowl and glasses; near it was a big tub of ice filled with bottles of champagne. A group of pretty little Japanese maids in their *kimonos*, with specially striking *obis* for the festive occasion, stood back of the punch-bowl and lent a picturesque touch of Japan.

At about half-past five a shrill shriek from a siren was heard, followed by whistles and tooting of horns, and along sped a big motor, followed by a couple of others close behind. Through the pink *lei* dashed the heavy car that led, scattering the flowers to right and left, and from its interior the Mitchell children, with shouts of glee, flung a profusion of carnations which fell amongst us, a shower of spicy sweetness. In the next car were the Singlee girls, Ashton Waller, and Teddy Skelton. They were in white, with pink *leis* about their necks and hats. Following them closely were Commodore and Mrs. Chandler, with Billy Barker. She wore a big picture hat and a gown that deepened and paled into exquisite tints of pink, and as she descended from the car,—after the motors had gone the length of the winding drive, and back again,—she looked like a lovely rose.

Amidst the tooting of horns, the shrieks of the siren, and the popping of champagne corks, the occupants of the cars alighted and were greeted by Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell. In a few moments trays filled with glasses of champagne were handed around by the Japanese maids.

“Here’s to the new road!” said the Commodore, stepping forward and raising his glass. “May it lead to happiness!”

“*Prosit!*” cried Billy Barker. “Me for the new road, for it never could be the straight and narrow path.”

This certainly was a tribute to the broad, winding driveway of which the Mitchells were so proud.

As the Commodore turned toward the table to put down his glass, Mrs. Mitchell stepped forward with Dr. Russell, who had just come in that morning on his way to San Francisco. Dr. Russell was one of our boys, who had accepted a position as ship's doctor, on account of his health, and had been travelling back and forth on one of the *Marus* for the past year.

"Let me introduce Dr. Russell," she began.
"Dr. Russell, Mr.——"

"Oh, I've met Mr. St. Claire before," said Dr. Russell.

"Beg pardon," said the Commodore coldly.
"I really haven't the pleasure."

He took off his hat and wiped his forehead leisurely.

Dr. Russell looked up with a puzzled glance.
"Perhaps I've made a mistake," he said slowly. "I mistook you for a chap I met at the United Club in Yokohama."

"So sorry,—I don't recall you," said the Commodore, and he turned abruptly away.

And as he did so, the *lei* he wore around his neck swung and caught in the button of Dr. Russell's coat. With a smothered oath, the Commodore jerked backward; his lips were drawn tight, showing his teeth in an ugly snarl. His expression was not pleasant; he did not look as though bound

by so light a tie as a floral wreath. It held for a moment and then parted, and the loosened petals of the flowers fell in a shower at his feet.

My! what a temper he had! I glanced at Mrs. Chandler; she was biting her lip and looked annoyed—or nervous. Neither of the men spoke, but after an awkward moment the Commodore, with a slight bow, moved away.

“Mrs. Kapua is not here,” said Mrs. Thornton, joining us. “I wonder why?”

“She telephoned me she had a bad headache and could not come,” replied Mrs. Mitchell.

“Will you go there with me in the morning?” Mrs. Thornton asked me. “I’ll just have time before we sail. I have an idea that I may have dropped my pin in one of those tall calabashes. We were talking and laughing, and might not have noticed, particularly if there was anything in the bottom that might have deadened the sound. It’s too late to drive there this afternoon, but if you’ll go there with me in the morning——”

“Of course I will!” I declared heartily.

Mrs. Mitchell bustled off to order more champagne, and Mrs. Thornton’s attention was claimed by Hugo Basilton, who had sauntered in a little late, with an absorbed air, and a toss of the coal black lock from his brow.

His wife had come before him and she explained that Hugo had felt so inspired by the moonlight, and the music, of the night before, that he had

waited to jot down a few notes, while he was in the mood. She said the native boys played "*Aloha Oë*" quite touchingly, but that Hugo's description of it made the tears come to her eyes.

Mrs. Spotfield, who had come with her, had allowed Billy Barker to greet his hostess; but that was all. After that, he was hers. Mrs. Chandler was helpless in the face of a determination so strong, and a strategy worthy of a general.

When Billy had stepped forward, held his glass on high, and proposed a toast, Mrs. Spotfield had not caught hold of his coat-tails and hauled him back; but she had got him just the same. And they had gone for a saunter under the golden shower trees. The yellow was more becoming to Mrs. Spotfield's blonde prettiness than the magentas and the crimsons, of the bougainvillæa and the *poinciana regia*, which were far too brilliant for her.

Adrienne and Céleste had separated into tête-à-têtes and individual effort, to the undoing of Ashton and Teddy.

The telephone was ringing insistently from the house, in the distance; no one seemed to notice it, however, and after a moment, I went up to Mrs. Mitchell and asked her if I should answer it for her.

"Oh, thank you, dear," she said. "If you don't mind. And if it is for me, take the message, or just send one of the Japs down to tell me."

I hurried off, as the telephone bell broke into a steady ring.

“Hello! Hello!” I cried somewhat breathlessly, as I took the receiver from the hook.

“Mrs. Mitchell’s house?” asked a musical voice, unmistakably Mrs. Kaupa’s. “Please ask Commodore Chandler to come to the telephone. Tell him the Moana Hotel wants him.”

“Hold the line,” I replied in a business-like tone, and I went to hunt up one of the Japs.

“You know Commodore Chandler?” I asked. “Yes, tall gentleman. You go tell him come telephone, *wiki wiki*” (quick).

The Jap flew, and as the Commodore came in the front door I went out the back.

“It was for the Commodore,” I explained to Mrs. Mitchell as I joined the party on the lawn again.

In a few moments he returned to us. “I’m so sorry, Mrs. Mitchell,” he said, “I shall have to go. Captain Jeffreys has telephoned me from the *Gelda*, and I shall have to get on board at once. I’m not going to hurry Mrs. Chandler off, though; Barker can bring her down later.”

He took his leave, and after a few words with Mrs. Chandler jumped into one of the automobiles and speeded away as though the *Gelda* were about to sink into the sea and needed him to save her.

XIII.

IN the morning, soon after breakfast, as Mrs. Thornton was going to sail for the Volcano at noon, we started for Mrs. Kapua's house, and when we drove up, she came to the head of the steps.

"*Aloha,*" she called. "Come right in."

As she stood, framed in the thick, trailing vines, in her red *holoku* of some soft, clinging, silky fabric, a single hibiscus flaming against her dark hair, she looked like a beautiful, big hibiscus blossom herself, blooming alone amidst the cool, green leaves, as if all the other flowers had lavished their beauty on her, and gone.

"We have not found it eh," she began at once. "I have searched the calabashes myself; but they are empty, absolutely empty. The entire house, you might say, has been turned upside down, and inside out. The rugs have been shaken, most of the furniture has been airing on the lawn; every corner has been swept out. If we only had yearly house cleanings, here in Hawaii—but as we do not, even that has not been accomplished." Mrs. Kapua's gesture told more plainly than her words that she had given up the search, at last.

"Oh dear," said Mrs. Thornton plaintively. "And all your trouble! It is too bad really."

"The trouble is nothing; don't think of it for a moment. I would gladly do anything on earth; nothing could be too much trouble! Have you any-

thing to suggest? Would you like to have the piano tuner come? The piano is the only place left and I have heard of jewelry being dropped inside——”

“No, no,” said Mrs. Thornton. “Nonsense; why the piano was not even open that evening. You’re awfully good,—there’s nothing more to be done on your part. It is still possible that the pin may turn up; perhaps when least expected. In the meantime, you must not bother any more;—please.”

Mrs. Kapua shook her head. “No,” she said. “No, that won’t do. I am going to follow this matter up. I shall find out who took your sunburst. It was stolen in my house, and I shall make it my business to find the thief.”

“Stolen,” I repeated. “The thief——”

“But who—how——” cried Mrs. Thornton.

“The sunburst was in your hair when you went inside to look at my calabashes. You were alone with Commodore Chandler and Frank Alden. When you came out, it was no longer in your hair.”

“But,” began Mrs. Thornton, after a moment, breaking in on the tense silence, “but if it cannot be found, what is the difference when it was lost?”

“It was not lost,” said Mrs. Kapua. “Not lost, but taken; as I said before,—*stolen*.”

I felt the blood rush to my head and then recede; my very lips felt cold and stiff; my heart beat almost to suffocation.

“I would stake my life on Frank Alden’s honesty!” said Mrs. Thornton; her voice trembled.

"Why of course eh," Mrs. Kapua rejoined calmly; her smile was sweet and lazy. "And," she added, with slow emphasis, "and Commodore Chandler's position, and wealth, raise him above the need of a defender."

My eyes met hers. Her glance was cold, implacable.

Commodore Chandler was her latest—and Frank had resisted Mrs. Kapua's fascinations in the past. Perhaps he was the only "town boy" whom first, last, and always, she had never been able to bring beneath her sway. And Mrs. Kapua had tried; she had started maybe idly, in an unoccupied moment, but failing then, she had not stopped; in one way, or another, she had exerted herself to secure Frank's attentions. Whether because of a real interest in him, or through her desire for conquest, it was impossible to know, but no matter what her reason, she was not used to failure. It reflected not only on her established reputation for winning in love, but on her *kahuna* domination as well. Success meant more to her than to other women; and Frank had not succumbed. Was this revenge? There was no doubt that Mrs. Kapua could hate.

"I believe that I can trace the guilt," she said confidently. "Suppose we let the matter rest for a while, that is apparently. Leave it in my hands, will you?"

"Why yes. Yes indeed," agreed Mrs. Thornton.

"I accuse no one," resumed Mrs. Kapua. "Not even in my own mind. I consider it my duty to sift the matter, and I am going to do it. It is time to put a stop to all this talk and gossip. I may not discover the thief in a moment eh; but it will not take me long."

The rest of the conversation was a blank to me. I saw nothing but the red gown,—the *kahuna* red; and its brilliancy meant power.

When we drove off, I had not opened my lips again, except to say good-by.

"She intends to find the culprit through her *kahuna* powers," I said to Mrs. Thornton, when I could speak. "In other words, whether she is a *kahuna* or not, she has the reputation, and she can influence many of the natives. It isn't the natives alone, either, who believe that Mrs. Kapua is a *kahuna*. Even Mrs. Fenwick, being superstitious, went to her when she lost her ring. If she decides to ruin Frank, she can! She dare not accuse him openly, but she can injure him with her innuendoes, backed by her reputed power."

"But why should she try to injure Frank? Do you suppose she is actually smitten with Commodore Chandler and is afraid that he might be suspected——"

"No, not that of course," I interrupted somewhat impatiently. "I mean, no one could suspect so wealthy a man. But she is trying to implicate Frank; nothing could be more evident than that."

Mrs. Thornton laughed at me and tried to reassure me; but she was plainly troubled.

“I must say that this has happened at an unfortunate time,” she admitted at last. “Frank has talked hard times so gloomily of late. Of course we—all his friends—understand. Now I am going to ask you a plain question: are you and Frank engaged?”

“No!” I answered emphatically.

“I was going to suggest that now would be a splendid time for you to announce it. Your father’s position in the Islands, his well-known integrity, would make the announcement of his daughter’s engagement equivalent to a guarantee of his belief in her lover. Such a proof of trust given to the public now would be enough to avert the possibility of suspicion; and suspicion is an ugly thing when once aroused. Of course I know the state of affairs between you two, or I would not say all this. I know that for five years, at least, Frank——”

“But what’s the difference what you may surmise?” I cried. “It is politeness to wait until you are asked. Please don’t say any more about it; no girl has a right to believe that a man loves her until he tells her so.”

“Oh bosh!” cried Mrs. Thornton. “I’d be mighty sorry for the woman who did not have sense enough to know when a man cares for her. Who waits for a proposal in this enlightened age! We may seem to, and we say we do, perhaps believe we

do, and any way we make the men think we do—but we all help along a lot."

I laughed.

"In this case you know as well as I do that Frank is only waiting to see his way clear. I never gave it much thought before—oh, what a fool a man is to wait for money——"

"Chivalrous perhaps," I interposed.

"I call it plain fool," said Mrs. Thornton. "Luckily we women were given intuition and thank goodness for that small favor. But where is yours? And where, oh where, is my beautiful diamond sunburst? If we could only find that! It is too absurd to speak of Frank being connected in any way with this loss; the idea of harboring such a ridiculous thought!"

"It is just as ridiculous to suspect Commodore Chandler."

"More so," assented Mrs. Thornton amiably.

And neither of us spoke again.

"What—what do you suppose she meant by saying that it was time to put a stop to the talk and gossip?" I asked at last.

"I was thinking of that," said Mrs. Thornton, "but there was nothing in that, after all. You know yourself that every one has been discussing the whole matter, and the pros and cons of it. But, I have been thinking of something else too; and I want to give you a piece of advice. Even if Mrs. Kapua did say that the pin was stolen, and did mean to

imply that Frank would be the more likely of the two men to be guilty, and that there was no one else to take it except one of them, we must pretend to ignore the suggestion, not to understand it. We must be absolutely oblivious to any innuendoes. She caught me unawares that time, or I would not have said so much. Above all, never let Frank dream that Mrs. Kapua attempted any insinuations against him. Men are so short-sighted; talk about the impetuosity of women; they are born diplomats in comparison with men. Frank would be likely to go to Mrs. Kapua and demand an explanation, and get her down on him in earnest. So, don't let him suspect, on any account."

"I won't. He must never know; I see that."

"I am sorry I ever took you there, and I'm sorry I am going off to the Volcano; but it will be only for a week, or so, and you'll see,—everything will brighten up for you and Frank. It's sure to, so promise me not to worry." Mrs. Thornton put her arm around me. "Mrs. Kapua is all right at heart. And no one could harm Frank in this community. You know that."

"Ye-es, I know. I suppose I know."

"Well, I must leave you; I have a few last things to put in my bag; good-by, dear. No, I won't be sea sick, but I suppose Mrs. Basilton will, and her blessings on my head will be doubtful ones. But, at least, we will have an active Volcano in Hugo's next novel."

I was too subdued to pursue this subject, and I went home to lunch.

But I could not eat; I could not even pretend, although I was conscious of Tumi's watchful eye upon me.

Tumi has been with me ever since I was a tiny baby. She came as nurse, but she has developed into housekeeper, companion, friend—Mrs. Thornton always adds: "and boss." Tumi is of the very best class of well-trained, old, Japanese servant, rare to-day in Hawaii because so sought after are they that they soon amass what is a fortune in their own country and return there to enjoy a life of ease. But Tumi would never leave me, so she has remained to make me the envy of all who know her worth.

She wears irreproachable *kimonos*, staid in coloring and handsome in material, and she scorns the bright *obis*, and various distractions of attire of the larger part of feminine Japanese-Hawaii. She guards my position in society jealously and had started, when I was of a very tender age, to steer me away from undesirable playmates. I loved her kind, old, ugly face and fought her, and rebelled at her authority, and relied on her common-sense absolutely, as I do to-day. Tumi is not a snob, although she has a great idea of class distinction, but her discrimination goes deeper than that, and her disapproval is never idly spoken. "She no your kind," she would say to me with a disdain that was con-

vincing, and sooner or later, I would find that Tumi was correct in her judgment.

Tumi likes Frank; she has decided that he is almost good enough for me, and she has accepted him. When she came in after lunch and found me crying, she said with some severity:

“What a matta? You fight sweet man?”

Tumi never could quite get sweetheart.

“No, no,” I said. “I no fight.”

Reassured, Tumi began to soothe me in her kindly way; she patted me gently on the back, and crooned over me as she used to do when I was a small child.

“*Pilikia, pil-i-kia, plenty pilikia,*” she repeated, over and over.

“No *pilikia*,” I sobbed. “Me very silly.” And I wept on.

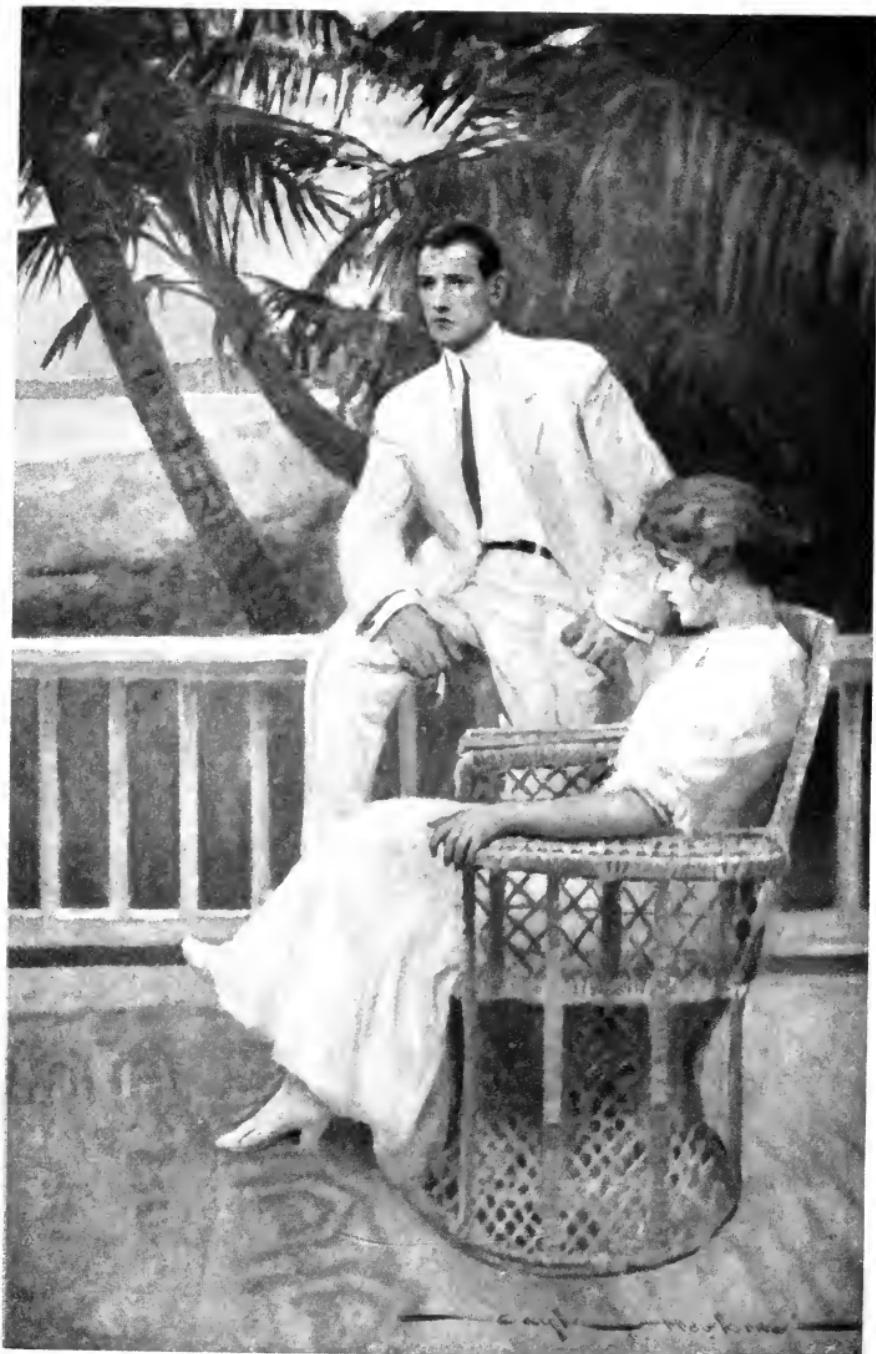
Tumi continued to pat me on the back, murmuring all the while, and at last she began to vary the monotony.

“*Pau, pau, by'n'by no pilikia; pau.*” *

Under this soothing influence, I wiped my eyes and tried to think the situation over calmly. Tumi waited, patting me tenderly.

We had drifted along, Frank and I, through the lazy, thoughtless, happy hours, content in the present, and with little thought for the future. It is a way we all acquire in *Hawaii nei*. As Frank has so often said: “We blame it on the climate, but when we blame the natives, we forget the excuse.”

* “Stop, stop, by and by no trouble; stop.”



"WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU LOVED A GIRL AND THAT GIRL WAS
IN DANGER?"

But now, brought face to face with danger, I knew that the ideal had vanished and we must meet the real.

“No *pilikia*,” said Tumi softly, “by’n’by you mally him.”

“He no got very much money, Tumi; he say no can.”

“By’n’by all light,” answered Tumi with conviction. “He good lawyer man; everybody say so; he got plenty sweetbreads, he sure make money.”

I laughed, for I had heard Tumi use sweetbreads for brains before, a slight misunderstanding between her and the butcher being responsible for this little mistake in anatomy, or perhaps only in the language. Tumi, encouraged by my brightened aspect, added hopefully:

“No got much money no good, but good inside more better.”

And with this philosophic reflection, she gave me a parting pat, and left me.

When Frank came in, after dinner, I began abruptly:

“What would you do if you loved a girl, and that girl was in danger?”

“I should try to save her.”

“But if the danger only threatened?”

“I should try to protect her.”

“Well, if you were a girl and the man you loved were threatened with disgrace, then what would you do?”

“ I’d use my tongue.”

“ But if your tongue were not long enough to reach? ”

“ It would be long enough if I loved.”

“ Then if it were tied; if the man had not cared enough for you to tell you so, and you had no right to go around defending him—then what? ”

“ Then I’d give up! ”

“ Ah, there’s the injustice of it! ” I cried. “ A girl can’t half live; she has to stifle every impulse, and half breathe, half act, half think, half talk——” I choked.

“ ’Tis true,” said Frank calmly.

I sprang to my feet.

“ But,” added Frank, “ if a man cared for a girl, she ought to know it, and she might dare to act.” I sank back in my chair. “ Of course you can’t change the world; a girl is restricted and always will be. A man who cared for a girl would fly from her if he was in danger, but he’d fly to her if danger threatened her. The girl who cares can look coy; it’s safe, and it’s about all there is for her to do.”

“ It’s cruel! ” I gasped. And Frank did not reply.

In the dark of the *lanai* I clenched my fists, and I didn’t look coy. I had my cue and I came on with a rush.

“ Frank,” I began solemnly, “ if I were accused of stealing Mrs. Thornton’s diamonds——”

“ You,” cried Frank. “ You! ”

Words seemed to fail him.

"I don't say it has come to that, not actually to that," I murmured with infinite guile; "but if I were suspected—if I should tell you——"

Frank began to pace up and down the *lanai*; this was encouraging.

"Impossible!" he exclaimed. "Preposterous!"

"Listen to what might be," I interposed.

"Mrs. Kapua is proud of being a *kahuna*, as you know. It gives her a position among the natives almost equal to that of a queen. On her birthday, she holds a regular little court; at all times, she is a leader. She loves power, and she does not intend to lose her prestige. If she is a *kahuna*, she ought to be able to trace the sunburst, lost in her own house and therefore her special interest to recover. She cannot find it; to gain time, she has to say it was stolen and that she will, in due season, show up the thief. Of course, later, she can say that the matter must be hushed up. But meanwhile she will have placed suspicion on some one. Now, as you must be aware, Mrs. Kapua does not like me——"

"No," interrupted Frank, "I had no idea; I thought she was a friend."

"Outwardly she is. Men are so unobservant though—a woman would know. She will never forgive me because you have shown that you like me more than you do her."

This was certainly the truth, although perhaps it worked two ways.

“But she cares nothing for me, not a snap of her finger. She——”

“That has nothing whatever to do with it. Whether she does like you, or whether she does not, she would never forgive any woman who was preferred to herself. Frank, surely you know that. In her heart, she would hate that woman. And now, perhaps, she has found a way to do me harm——”

I waited for Frank to digest this. And if walking a mile or so a minute was conducive to digestion, I certainly might venture to proceed. I recalled one incident of Mrs. Kapua’s *luau* after another which could be construed into evidence against myself, joining them into quite a logical whole. Frank might be a lawyer, but even a lawyer’s heart may get away with his head. At any rate, Frank came over to my chair and took my hand in his.

“Give me the right to defend you!” he cried. “You know I am poor, you know I have been waiting until I could at least plan a wedding-trip before I asked you to marry me—before I told you of my love. But now——”

“You don’t really love me!” I broke in impetuously. “True love does not wait to calculate, to doubt, to question. Love does not need a wedding-trip. Just to be with the one you care for—that alone is enough. On a desert island one could know infinite content. But you—you talk of wedding-trips, the future, and call your doubts my happiness. I—I’m sure you plan ahead and even wonder if you

can afford a hack for my wedding calls. Love! You don't know what love is! Love lets the future take care of itself; it oversteps, it *strides* over, the bounds of prudence. Love cannot be argued down, repressed——”

But I was sobbing it all out in Frank's arms.

“Little one,” he murmured. “Little one!”

As our lips met I knew the weary months of waiting, the tender unselfishness, the disappointments, the hope,—the love that was strong enough to endure.

And Frank,—I wondered if he knew my soul was in that kiss.

In a few moments Frank said we would announce it soon.

And I said:

“*We will!*”.

XIV.

It's a great thing to have an imagination. I remember asking Adrienne Singlee, one day when we were on our way to school, whether she would rather have an imagination, or a whole half a pie. Adrienne promptly replied: "Pie." She was always so volatile. I explained to her that it could be only one kind and she would have to choose which, that the pastry might be dough, the filling unsatisfactory, and the total indigestion. It sounded something like our arithmetic lesson.

"But, if you have an imagination," I continued, "you can start with lemon meringue, and have apple, peach, raspberry,—one after another; you can put whipped cream on top and take it off; you can—"

"Well, I'd rather have just pie," said Adrienne conclusively.

As I rocked in the hammock, ruby rings, diamond rings, pearls, sapphires, all the jewels, and all the combinations, with various settings, and all sorts of designs, in fact everything I'd ever seen, or heard of, or could think of, in the way of rings, had adorned the third finger of my left hand.

Frank had telephoned that he would be here in a few moments. If he could know half the rings of my fancy, he would be discouraged with any reality. But it would not take me long to convince him that to be engaged to an imagination has its advantages.

For no matter how small the stones, their sparkle would carry a new message each day to my heart. This was not sentimental, but a natural sequence of thought.

Still, I'd bravely got over any prejudice I might once have had against the sentimental. And it really seems as if Frank had too.

"Have you had a very busy day?" I asked him abruptly; I wanted to convince him that my mind was not entirely on his gift, which perhaps after all he had not brought.

"I don't know whether it was busy, or not," he answered slowly. "I don't know. I'll tell you about it, dear; it was a lovely day."

I glanced up quickly.

"A day with you," he added. "This morning I was dropped softly in my office on a rosy cloud, where you and I had been floating in a dream that was all joy. I floated on the rosy cloud through the day, and you were always by my side. If my clients, who tried to drag me down to earth, had guessed that I was treading on air, if the Judge had known that your dear eyes were shining on me and holding me spell-bound, while he talked—but, no one knew, and no one cared, and that was my real day until now, when the rosy cloud has floated me here to you,—to YOU."

"Oh, Frank," I murmured; and I shut my eyes against the lapel of his coat.

Frank put his other arm around me. "I can't

very well put that ring on your dear, little hand, when both arms are occupied," he whispered after a few moments; it seemed like a few.

I knew that I ought to pretend that I'd rather have the ring, although of course the ring would keep, so after a while, I said:

"Well, you can have one arm." It sounded quite like a new idea.

Naturally it took some time to decide which, but Frank finally came to as satisfactory a conclusion as seemed possible in the circumstances. He gave me a purple velvet box and stood off to watch me open it.

Inside was the most beautiful diamond ring that ever sealed an engagement in Honolulu, or perhaps anywhere else in the whole, wide world. It was not because it was mine, not because Frank had given it to me. There were three exquisite diamonds, set with smaller ones, making a cluster that was really gorgeous in effect. I gasped. My imagination had not conjured up anything like this.

"Oh, Frank, you extravagant——"

"You like it then!" he cried.

And as he came towards me, I threw both my arms around his neck. I couldn't scold him when he was just beaming with pleasure; and if I had a vision of a trip to Europe on the money the ring must have cost, it was smothered entirely, while I was smothered almost.

After all, we were in Hawaii. The natives spend

their week's earnings for fish, each Saturday night, without a thought, or a care, for the morrow. We unconsciously imbibe this happy-go-lucky spirit. Frank had been over-careful, over-prudent, but in the reaction of a new-found joy, he could be reckless. I was glad to give up the trip to Europe; glad that he had proved he could forget everything but his present happiness, and me.

"But where did you get it—such a beauty! Oh, Frank, it must have looked as if there were a girl in the background for you to be buying this."

"Trust me," he answered, with a chuckle. "We will never be discovered through it; I looked out for that."

"It would be nice to keep our engagement a secret; wouldn't it be lovely, Frank, only to have us know."

"Just you and me," murmured Frank.

"We could go on, as we have always, and no one would dream——"

"No one would ever suspect——"

"Our own secret, Frank——"

"Between us; between you and me; oh, little one." Frank's arms tightened around me tenderly.

I had always been sure of his sympathy, his understanding of me, an understanding that was sometimes like intuition. It was not only that we had grown up together, gone to school together as children. I had grown up with all Honolulu, and I had been kept busy drifting apart ever since, from

one after the other, as years of discretion, and discrimination, settled upon me. But with Frank it was different. When he returned from college, we had fallen into the old comradeship as naturally as though neither he, nor I, had ever been away; and ever since it had been the same. Was ever such perfect accord between any two people as there was between Frank and me? How smooth the course of true love for us! Frank would not have to tremble when he asked my father for me. How dreadful it would have been if I had never known him. Fancy if I had become engaged to a man like the Commodore who would never hide his light under a bushel, nor his diamonds under a sentiment. He would have displayed that ring, on his way to give it to me, and my beautiful romance would have been shattered.

“I’m glad you don’t want to announce our engagement,” said Frank.

And somehow, when he said that, I seemed to come back to earth, and to meet it with a good, hard bump, too. All my life I would have to bear alone the guilty consciousness of having, myself, brought Frank’s attentions to a climax, of having, in a bare-faced manner, fished for a proposal. I had sacrificed my dignity, and trodden on tradition. I had played upon the chivalry of a gentleman. I had misrepresented deliberately, I had plotted cold-bloodedly. My only excuse was my object,—and I had forgotten it. If it were not worthy of remembrance, then what was I?

I laughed carelessly. "Oh, that was only play. Of course we must announce it."

"I don't see why."

"Here's why." I held up my hand and turned it this way, and that. The diamonds caught the light, and shone, and sparkled, and flashed, with dazzling brilliancy. "Isn't it lovely?" I cried. "If we did not tell, I couldn't wear this."

"Wear it when I come, just for me, dear." Frank took my other hand and kissed it.

"But, Frank, you said—"

"Never mind what I said. I had not thought then."

"I want to tell every one," I said impetuously. "I want every one to know how happy I am; I couldn't hide such happiness as mine."

Oh, the tender silence of the next few moments; it seemed too beautiful to break.

"Later then, perhaps," said Frank. "If you want—if you'd rather,—but there's no rush, you know—"

I drew back. "Neither is there any reason for secrecy," I said quietly.

Frank rose and lit a cigarette. I waited until there was a hazy mist of smoke between us.

"So, we might as well announce it *at once*. Don't you think so, Frank?"

Frank smoked, and I watched him.

"We could announce it now, right now, through the telephone," I began again.

Frank laughed. "Oh, where is romance!" he

cried. "When we do tell, wouldn't you like to do it in some good, old-fashioned way?"

"Yes," I assented eagerly. "How?"

"But we had decided, you know, to keep it to ourselves for a while, a short while. Why not, dear? When a round of entertainments begin in our honor, where will our hearts be? Crowded up somewhere and forgotten, while we struggle with too many dinners and indigestion."

"But Frank, I told you the possibilities, the danger;—either of us might be accused, perhaps not openly, but covertly, which is worse, of stealing Mrs. Thornton's sunburst. It is gone; some one took it. Any one might be suspected, to-day, to-morrow—any one, I mean, who was at Mrs. Kapua's native feast. If we tell that we are engaged now, it will show at least that we trust each other."

"My serious little sweetheart," said Frank, half tenderly, half mockingly, "does she want to be a Protection and Relief Society of two?"

I laughed in spite of myself. After all, our romance was a present fact, danger was only a possible future.

"Let them talk, dear one," he continued. "Who knows but that they might say we were going to marry, set up housekeeping, and live happily forever after on the sale of the stolen stones; it's just as likely. Then, after we really got into trouble, they'd rally around us and we would be an uncomfortable heroine and hero,—can't you see us!"

Please keep our little secret, dear ; we can be romantic only this once. Don't let people, don't let the outside world come between us yet,—not yet."

And Frank threw his cigarette away and took me gently in his arms.

I must say it was not hard to persuade me. Frank was only urging my own real, true, innermost wishes. I was more than willing.

But at Waikiki, where all sides of a house are front, where visitors may enter by way of the Beach, the road, or the neighbors' gardens, where keeping open house is literally that, and where the stranger at your gates comes right through them, one may be 'all for love and the world well lost,' only figuratively speaking.

I started as I heard a crunching on the sands ; voices floated on the air, a woman's and a man's.

"They may pass on," Frank murmured hopefully.

But they were coming nearer and nearer. The woman's laugh was Mrs. Spotfield's.

Frank put his hand on mine. "I'll have the joy of giving you this again, after they go," he whispered. And he slipped the ring off my finger and put it in his vest pocket.

It was well that he remembered. Mrs. Spotfield's quick eyes would have seen it at once.

As she reached the steps of the *lanai*, I went forward to greet her. Billy Barker was with her, and they explained that they'd been making calls along

the Beach, everybody had been out, so far, and now they were going to reap the reward of merit and enjoy a rest on my *lanai*.

If my enthusiasm at this proposition was overdone, neither Mrs. Spotfield, nor Billy, seemed to notice it.

"It seems to me that Mr. Barker and I have met the whole of Honolulu this afternoon," said Mrs. Spotfield.

And she looked so conscious, and so pleased, that I felt sure Mrs. Chandler must have been one who had seen her and Billy Barker together. So, just to be agreeable, I said:

"I generally meet the whole of Honolulu when I am not looking my best; you are lucky."

Mrs. Spotfield smiled and looked prettier than ever. She had on a simple white frock, with becoming touches of pink, and her blonde hair was all short and curly, under a hat covered with pink roses.

"Yes, if we did dress up for this outing, we feel repaid; this is my best blue tie," said Billy Barker modestly.

"First, we saw Mr. and Mrs. Cyril Lumsing, and it is plain she didn't calculate on this tropical climate when she invested in English hair dye; and so she's acquired some pale green threads amongst the gold. Then, we met Adrienne Singlee and Cherub Billkins, but she's wasting her time on him, for he's the very worst flirt in the Navy. After

them, we saw Guy Selby and Teddy Skelton, with two pretty girls,—weren't they pretty, Mr. Barker?"

"Peaches," said Mr. Barker conclusively.

"Who were the girls?" I asked.

"They came in on the Transport yesterday," explained Billy. "Who wouldn't be a Transport chaser?"

"Then we met Mr. Mitchell, and then—oh then, we saw you, Mr. Alden, but you didn't see us; you were walking with Mrs. Kapua, strolling along as if the day were before you and hurry was the unknown quantity that it used to be before annexation. Mrs. Kapua really looked awfully handsome, didn't she, Mr. Alden?"

"Mrs. Kapua is always handsome," answered Frank.

"And last, but not least, we saw the Commodore and Mrs. Chandler coming up from the wharf. Now, wasn't that an eventful afternoon, I'd like to know?"

I glanced at Frank. He had not mentioned Mrs. Kapua, when he had pictured his happy day to me.

"By the way, Frank," said Billy Barker, "the Commodore has a few shares left of that stock he has let Mrs. Kapua and me have. You remember, I told you about it the other day. Take a chance, old fellow. The Commodore is a decent chap; he's letting us have it at par, although it's advanced

at least ten points. There's every prospect of it going much higher."

"I believe Jo Elkins has taken the rest of it," said Frank.

"Not all the shares; I know there are still a few."

"Well, I'll think it over," said Frank.

"I was just saying to Mr. Barker, as we came along, that I really thought Mrs. Chandler was the most unusual, the most interesting woman in Honolulu," said Mrs. Spotfield, "and that's saying an awful lot, isn't it?"

"It is," said Frank and Billy Barker together, as though they saw their duty clearly, and did it.

"There's always something about Mrs. Chandler to keep you guessing," continued Mrs. Spotfield.

"Well, don't guess," interposed Billy lazily, "do in Rome as the Romans do. The Hawaiian knows nothing, sees nothing, asks nothing. Her first cousin may look upon the wine when it is red, and she may have to help her into bed, but she shuts her eyes. What she hears is idle gossip, what she sees, she forgets, and——"

"How different we are, Mr. Barker. Now, for instance, that afternoon when we were on the *Gelda*, you remember when the Japanese maid brought that sheet of paper to the Commodore? How quickly Mrs. Chandler left us, and got over to them. Perhaps she has a Past!"

"Oh, it was only some drawings," I said.

“But perhaps we all have letters to burn,” I added with a laugh.

And I thought of my ring in Frank’s vest pocket; I felt almost as if I had a Past myself.

“Well, I’ve decided she must have something in her life,” persisted Mrs. Spotfield. “Of course with a yacht, she can get away from it.”

“Let’s hope she won’t get becalmed,” said Billy Barker.

“Oh! pshaw, you know what I mean; when one is fortunate enough to have a yacht, and jewels, and French gowns, and all that Mrs. Chandler has, one can even enjoy a Past; and I believe she does.”

“The dodging of a Past may be the pastime of a Future,” said Frank.

“I believe you and Mr. Barker are just guying me,” said Mrs. Spotfield, with a pout.

But I thought Frank’s remark was very neat, until he added:

“Mrs. Kapua is going on the *Gelda* to-night to a dinner.”

This did not seem at all apropos to me. What had suggested Mrs. Kapua to Frank? He had forgotten to mention her to me when it might have been expected he would; why should he recall her now?

“You’re bidden to the feast, Billy?” he continued.

“Yes, I’ll be there; it’s just a small dinner and bridge.”

Of course Frank might have spoken of Mrs. Kapua and the dinner to change the subject; I hadn't thought of that before. Billy had not been looking pleased. He was not the sort of man to relish remarks like Mrs. Spotfield's, although he might believe they were made in an innocence to fit her blonde prettiness, and girlish smile.

"Mrs. Kapua is a wonder at cards. She carries the same unchanging serenity through a losing game. But to-night we expect to walk away with the Commodore, and to wipe the Doctor off the face of the earth."

"They've been winning lately, haven't they?" asked Frank.

"Yes; the luck has changed. The Commodore lost steadily at first; now, we are in for it."

"'Lucky at cards, unlucky in love,' you know," said Mrs. Spotfield playfully.

And she smiled straight at Billy. It would have taken a very modest, and a very obtuse man not to see the flattery, and a very different man from Billy not to respond to it.

"It's a shame to spend such perfect evenings playing cards any way," said Billy. "But, I've promised now."

"Oh, I have an engagement too," said Mrs. Spotfield, with an ingenuousness that held its own appeal.

Mrs. Thornton's advice had been wise; it was far better that Frank and Mrs. Kapua should be

friends and that he should not hear her insinuations against himself. It was possible that Frank had met her quite by accident, as he was going to Court, for instance, or maybe as he was leaving Court. He couldn't shut himself up in a box, because he was engaged to me. It might, of course, strike one as strange that Frank should have neglected to tell me of his walk—or, rather, stroll—with her. Although why, after all, should he tell me of the trivial happenings of each day? But to-day was different,—I recalled Frank's day,—such a beautiful day, with me always by him on that rosy cloud—

“Oh, must you go?” I said, with a start.

And I rose from my chair to speed the parting guest.

It must have been fully a half hour later, when Frank asked me why I was smiling so sweetly, like a happy little angel.

But I only nestled up to Frank and I did not explain. In fact, I was thinking that pink was very unbecoming to Mrs. Kapua. And I was glad. For she might have had—perhaps—just a corner on that rosy cloud.

XV.

MRS. THORNTON had returned from the Volcano, and taken a week's rest. The wonders of the burning lake, with its waves of molten lava dashing against the sides of the crater, the thundering detonations, the heat, the glow, the fiery spray, the whole, wondrous, dazzling, awesome spectacle, familiar to us all, but ever new in its terrible significance, had seemed to hold Hugo Basilton spellbound. But on the way home, he had heaved a deep sigh, tossed his coal black lock of hair from his brow, and had said:

“It is worthy of my pen,” or words to that effect. Mrs. Thornton said she needed a rest, after that remark.

We had all gone down with *leis* to see the Basiltons off to Japan; and we had been promised a copy of the author's Romance of Hawaii; Billy Barker said perhaps he always bought up the first edition himself. The romance was already named: “A Heart's Lava Flow.”

Mrs. Thornton came out of her retirement and announced that she was going to give a picnic. Now, Mrs. Thornton's picnics were generally timed to the clearness of the weather and the arrival of some one new to entertain. This happy conjunction had failed; there didn't happen to be any letters of introduction lately to arouse Honolulu. But as the sun continued to shine in unabated

splendor, and the breezes blew fresh from the right direction, Mrs. Thornton couldn't resist, so she went ahead with only half an excuse.

Of course if you are romantic by nature, you can be romantic on a hot day in a pineapple field, unsheltered to the sky above, with the low-lying, stiff-leaved bushes and their prickly fruit surrounding you. But it would be a test. When Mrs. Thornton gives a picnic, the test is not a question of persistence so much as resistance. For, if there was ever a romantic spot, it is just where Mrs. Thornton always gives her picnics.

There is a waterfall and a swimming pool, reflecting the cloudless skies, its clear depths deepening into still lovelier tints of blue to where the fine yellow sands shimmer at the bottom. Around the borders, every variety of bigonia grows in tropical lavishness, with big, velvety leaves, furry and smooth, of daintiest pastel tints shading to rich, dark greens, all shapes and sizes making up their queer irregularity of outline. There are bushes of them, some as tall as young trees, their delicate, wax-like flowers waving in graceful clusters of scarlet, or pink, from their slender stems in an exuberance that mocks at the hot-house cultivation of colder lands. Massed among them, the fronds of rare ferns curve and fall to a wonderful length, huge leaves with markings of crimson, radiating from flaming centres, spring up everywhere on sturdy stalks of varying height, and brilliant cro-

tons vie with them in flaring colors that blend into gorgeous harmony. A superb bouquet to hold this azure pool, like a glistening sapphire, in its midst; and as though too precious to be left unguarded, it is almost hidden in a rampant growth of palms and bamboo. Drooping ferns, and mosses, hang in profusion from the high banks above the clear waters and up, way up, but by a gradual ascent easy to climb, there is another pool, and still wandering on, we could lose ourselves in the tangle of overgrowth beyond.

But the favorite walk is along the stream that winds for miles through groves of tall, old trees, their trunks completely hidden with all sorts of trailing vines. Shady paths, moss grown, fern bordered, cool, fragrant, invite one farther and farther, and rustic bridges built over the water tempt one to cross, first to this side and then to that, in search of the bright, little wild flowers, peeping out amidst the riot of greens.

There is a pretty bungalow, with a big *lanai*, and every convenience, but it didn't count on an occasion like this, so we ate our lunch outside, sitting on the mossy banks by the edge of the stream. A bonfire was burning under the cocoanut trees, in an open space a short distance away, and when Ah Lung brought bowls of chowder deliciously hot, and the siphon bottles, lying about in the water, were refreshingly cold, we pretended we didn't know about the proximity of the ice-box, and the stove.

A picnic, with its possibilities of delight and none of its discomforts, with caterpillars a rarity, and snakes an impossibility, could scarcely fail to be a success. I didn't know whether the feast was nectar and ambrosia, but it seemed quite as appetizing. My thoughts had wandered off, so I could scarcely judge. For in my imagination I was taking with Frank the walk through the shady woods that I knew he was planning. We were just getting to the "Toll Bridge," known to tradition, and quite as insistent as any mistletoe bough could ever hope to be, when Frank said:

"I'll take these sandwiches over to Mrs. Kapua; shall I?"

I really didn't know what he meant by: "Shall I?" For, if he was hunting for encouragement, why hadn't he waited for it?

Mrs. Kapua was half lounging on a rise in the bank, near by, the trunk of a tree at her back. She looked comfortable enough to be in an arm-chair, an upholstered one. She gave Frank one of her dazzling smiles, a flash of dark eyes and white teeth. Her color was exquisite, and made her deep eyes more beautiful than ever. At her feet was the Commodore, handsomer than ever in his white flannels and soft shirt, with its low collar and careless tie.

Adrienne Singlee was near me, and I leaned over to her and whispered: "Where's Ashton Waller, you fickle little flirt?"

Adrienne had come in a buggy with Mr. Bill-

kins. He was fair, and florid, and young. He looked as if he didn't have a care in the world and wouldn't keep one, if he did have it. He had gone for some salad, and Adrienne appeared so conscious that she was an invitation for investigation.

"But Ashton is only an ensign, and Mr. Billkins is a lieutenant," said Adrienne. "And Céleste will be coming out before I know it. And I am twenty-two."

Adrienne was always satisfactory. There was nothing further left to enquire.

"Mr. Billkins is different," continued Adrienne. "If he is devoted to a girl, he is not going to stop rushing her with that same, old recitation:—'Gossip can't hurt me, but I must protect you; for your sake we must part,'—you know, the usual rigmarole."

It did sound familiar. Mr. Billkins was returning with the salad, as if he were in a great hurry to get back to Adrienne, and he presented it to her like a courtier serving his queen.

Frank had only handed the sandwiches to Mrs. Kapua.

Céleste was with Teddy Skelton. She was the image of Adrienne and the other Singlees, a slender slip of a girl with a clear, olive skin, and black eyes with the suggestion of a slant. And as she was not yet really "out" and Léonie was still away at school, her good times were untinged by sober reflection. Teddy and she romped, and played ball with

the oranges, and made a wonderful pink lemonade in some mysterious way which they refused to divulge, undaunted by our refusal to partake without the reassurance of the recipe. She laughed at Teddy's jokes, knew most of his classmates, their joys and their sorrows, she had read the latest "Lucky Bag" from cover to cover, and remembered it; she had, in fact, found the straight path to Teddy's heart. It was that way with the Sing-lees. They didn't plunge into the Navy. They started with the middies—and worked their way up, too.

Mrs. Thornton had invited a number of extra men. She said they were needed at a picnic because they looked so well lying around on the sward at the feet of the women, and besides she wanted to provide a substitute for Billy Barker and among so many of his sex, this ought to be easy. She didn't care whether Mrs. Chandler, or Mrs. Spot-field, got Billy, but she did not think it was quite fair, at a picnic, for him to be so overworked.

And after lunch, Mrs. Spotfield, surrounded by substitutes, sat in the shade, with a becoming pink parasol over her, and smiled on as she saw Mrs. Chandler and Billy Barker go off together through the woods.

Mrs. Thornton, who had just joined me with her husband, gave me a look, which betrayed a conscious pride in her own diplomacy.

Adrienne disappeared in one direction with Mr.

Billkins, and Céleste sought the upper pool with Teddy Skelton, and a box of candy. The Mitchells, and Elkins, and Stowes, had drifted towards the *lanai* and some comfortable chairs. A few of the others had gone to see the grass hut. Captain Bryce, the Paymaster, and Guy Selby, were devoting themselves to a group of girls, although Guy had one eye on me, and a budding determination to join me when he had a chance, was quite apparent.

I carefully avoided his eye, and gave him no encouragement lest it might be awkward to get away when Frank came for me.

The Comodore rose slowly to his feet and towered above Mrs. Kapua. Frank had monopolized her completely, and the Commodore had been left out in the cold with the neglected sandwiches beside him. But before he had a chance to speak, Frank held out his hand to Mrs. Kapua, and she got up with his aid, and found a steady footing on the slippery moss.

“Which way are we going?” she asked.

Frank’s gesture pointed to our favorite walk; past the bungalow, to the right, across the first bridge, and on—

Mrs. Kapua threw a glance over her shoulder at the Commodore, a glance that said: “Your chance may come.”

And she sauntered off with Frank at a gait cer-

tainly not calculated to insure even an arrival anywhere, much less a return.

“What do you think of this for a glorious spot!” said the Commodore to me.

But his tone really held no more enthusiasm than if he’d said: “What do you think of this for a queer trick!”

Mr. and Mrs. Thornton, seeing that their guests were so happy, and that every one was provided for, went off for a walk, looking like the pair of lovers that they assuredly were, as they disappeared hand in hand. It certainly was refreshing to see a married couple who preferred to be together.

I didn’t feel much like talking to the Commodore, but he could be very charming, and very interesting, and he seemed bent upon proving this to me now. He told me about Samoa and its tropical fascination, how much more primitive it was than Hawaii, what an ideal country it would be for a honeymoon with its romantic scenery, and about a stunning Samoan beauty, the daughter of a poor fisherman, who had been adopted by a wealthy, fad-crazy, English couple, passing through Apia. They had taken her to London to be educated. She had lately been returned to her father and his lowly hut, cultured, accomplished, luxury loving, and miserable—her whilom parents having adopted Pomeranians instead.

The Commodore thought that jail would be too

good a place for the thoughtless experimenters who had forgotten the unfortunate Samoan girl, languishing in the home wherein she had once been contented. The Commodore's picture of "Poor, little Kiva," as he called her, was a pathetic one. Of course I wanted to hear if she was becoming adjusted, if she missed her piano, her schoolmates, if she would marry, if she could possibly fall in love with one of her own race and settle down to such a different life, after the years spent in London. The Commodore didn't know any more about Kiva, but he promised to keep me posted about anything he might hear of her and no matter in what part of the world he might be, he would not forget.

The *Gelda*, he explained, would probably sail for San Francisco, from the Islands; after that, they had made no definite plans, until they went to the Mediterranean for the winter.

"By the way," he added abruptly, "I've been thinking of asking young Alden to go with us, just for the trip, you know. Mrs. Chandler and I have taken a fancy to him; he's a fine fellow and he works so hard, he ought to have a vacation. I know he's a good friend of yours, tell me, do you think he could get off with us?"

"Well, I'm sure I don't know; it's awfully kind of you——" I stopped short. That sounded as if I owned Frank; it wasn't my place to thank the Commodore for his invitation.

"I don't know if he'd be interested in a trip to

San Francisco, that's the only thing. Now, if we were going to Japan," said the Commodore, "Japan is more unusual of course, and besides I hear he has friends in Yokohama, has he not? "

"Yes; he has been in Japan; did he tell you? "

"No; Mrs. Kapua happened to mention it, and I was thinking it would make it so pleasant for him to return there. I forgot all about asking him if he had met Dick Joyce, or Harry Bellairs, or Phillips, the chap who married a Japanese girl,—all good fellows, members of the United Club."

I hadn't heard Frank mention any of these.

"Then there was John Boynton——"

"Oh, Frank knows him," I cried, "he's an old friend."

"A fine fellow, a fine fellow!" said the Commodore; "I have not written to him since I left. You'd think, on the yacht, that one would have plenty of time for writing, but I never was much for letters. I must ask Alden if he's heard from old John lately. I suppose they correspond? "

"I don't know," I said, as the Commodore seemed to be politely waiting to give me a chance to answer.

I was glad when Guy Selby, with his budding determination in full bloom, left the group, where there was a safety in numbers quite unsuited to his taste, and came down towards us. The Commodore and I had reached the stage when we were palpably making conversation and besides I'd rather Frank

would find me with Guy, when he returned, than with the Commodore. I never have been able to understand any one being jealous myself, jealousy being an ingredient completely left out of my composition, but Frank had shown he was undeniably jealous of Guy Selby, and Frank deserved to be punished. For although I didn't care, still he could have asked me to go for a walk, instead of taking Mrs. Kapua. Even admitting that it was all her fault; she of course wanted to add Frank to her list of conquests.

Mrs. Spotfield made an effort to stop Guy, as he was passing, evidently believing that the next best thing to quality was quantity. If she could not have Billy Barker, she was going to let him, and Mrs. Chandler, see her surrounded by a little court of which she was queen. So she wanted to add Guy to the four, or five, men already hovering about her. But, straight as a well-shot arrow from its bow, Guy came to me. It showed what will and force of character could accomplish under the proper incentive. This reminded me that Mrs. Kapua was always strong willed, and goodness knows Frank is an incentive.

Guy was truly welcome when he joined us. In a few moments, the Commodore made some excuse and went to meet Mr. and Mrs. Thornton, who were slowly walking back.

Guy Selby is the only man I ever knew who could insure a *tête-à-tête* by auto suggestion. It

has the advantage of being absolutely polite, as well as efficacious, and the subconscious victim never fails to move off, instead of staying to sit it out.

"At last!" he whispered, as the Commodore moved away.

The balm of Gilead could not have been more soothing. In easy words of one syllable, Guy had told a story of resolve, and struggle, the fighting for a great end, and of a final achievement. I had been put on a pedestal, and I looked down at Guy and smiled sweetly, and I felt just like saying: "Thanks for the seat," I really enjoyed it so much.

Being perfectly comfortable, I naturally refused to go for a stroll. I certainly did not intend to appear deserted when Frank returned, but I was willing to remain where he could find me, without wasting the rest of the afternoon searching.

A *tête-à-tête* with Guy was indisputably a flirtation, even if one kept the other end only half up. Time really passed quite quickly,—still I recognized it as time. Mrs. Kapua was always an unusual walker for this climate.

I couldn't help wondering why Frank had not told me my hands were beautiful; I could not remember his ever having intimated anything of the kind. He had called them dear, but he had never said they were pretty, in fact he hadn't laid much stress on my hands. But they certainly were white, as Guy said. Could it be possible for a man to be really in love with a girl and not notice every good point

she might possess? It may be true that lovers do not talk much, or it may be possible that the frequent lover becomes the more expert in what to say. I recalled "The Silent Lover" with some satisfaction.

"Passions are likened best to floods and streams,
The shallow murmur but the deep are dumb."

How true!

Frank and Mrs. Kapua strolled into sight. I failed to meet Frank's quick look in my direction, being utterly absorbed in Guy.

"It was a beautiful walk; oh, so beautiful!" cried Mrs. Kapua in her voice of music, as she and Frank paused beside us.

She was glowing and animated. The scent of some ylang ylang blossoms she wore hung faintly on the air; to me it was sickeningly sweet.

"It was beautiful here too,—just sitting here in this glorious spot and being lazy,—and happy!" I said, with all the enthusiasm that the occasion demanded.

"But I'm thirsty eh," said Mrs. Kapua plaintively.

"Let me get you a drink," offered the Commodore, who had come along with Mrs. Thornton.

"No; no thanks," said Mrs. Kapua, "there's only one drink in the world that could satisfy me, and that I cannot have."

“Oh, what a reflection on our new wine cellar!” Mrs. Thornton said reproachfully.

The Commodore picked up one of the glasses near us, and begged her to name the beverage, so he could fly for it.

“You’re very good to me, but what I want eh, is the milk of a young cocoanut,” said Mrs. Kapua with a gesture, at once of apology and relinquishment.

“She has but to speak, and milk and honey flow through the land,” said the Commodore. “You hold the glass, Mrs. Kapua.”

“Nonsense,” cried Mrs. Kapua, “I was only joking.” She glanced up at the tall trees just beyond, affording no foothold their entire, smooth, slim length. “You cannot get me a cocoanut.”

“And why not?” asked the Commodore.

“Well, I used to have a sweetheart, when I was a girl, who could shinny up a cocoanut tree and bring me all the cocoanuts I wanted, but I don’t know any one now capable of that wonderful feat.”

“I could do better than that as a lover,” the Commodore declared. “I would stay at the bottom of the tree and make love to the girl, and bring the cocoanuts to her at the same time.”

Mrs. Kapua opened her big, lustrous eyes. “Oh Commodore,” she said, with a little laugh, but the caressing note in her voice softened her incredulity.

“I can’t make love with an audience,” said the

Commodore ; his laugh tempered the boldness of the return glance he threw toward Mrs. Kapua. "But I am going to make good on the rest of my boast," he added.

He took a few steps forward and stood a moment selecting his tree. With his head thrown back, he measured its height with narrowed eyes.

Of course the attention of every one was on him; he looked, for all the world, like a favorite type of the magazine illustrator with his fine physique, and clear cut features.

"Now, Mrs. Kapua, here's your cocoanut!" he said, and putting his hand in his hip pocket, he took out a pistol and almost before we had a chance to protest, he aimed and shot into the top of the nearest tree, waving its plumed top lazily in the light breeze. A big nut fell to the ground.

The Commodore, laughing at the startled little screams, and exclamations, all around, went and picked it up.

"You see," he said, "it is not hurt; I aimed for the stem."

The men all clustered about the Commodore; it was true the bullet had pierced only the stem.

"But this is not a young one," he said.

He shot again, and again, with an unfailing aim that broke only the stem each time and brought the fruit down, unhurt.

He certainly was a picture, as he stood there, but I could not help thinking how I would hate to

have him for an enemy. The coldness of his eyes, the hint of cruelty in his mouth, would give but little hope of mercy.

His expression changed as he stopped shooting and looked at Mrs. Kapua. She returned his look. It had been an exhibition of manly prowess that held for her a potent fascination, and she made no secret of her admiration.

“There was an interesting case in Samoa, a while before we got there,” said the Commodore. “One of the favorite dancers in Apia, a handsome Samoan girl, had transferred her affections to some new arrival, and her lover was furiously jealous. One day, he found his sweetheart sitting under a cocoanut tree with his rival. He whipped out his pistol, but instead of shooting the man, he shot into the tree above him. It was at least ninety feet high, but so accurate was his aim that the nut he brought down, hit his victim square on the head. He was killed instantly. The lover was acquitted of course; a verdict of accidental death was returned.”

Before we had thoroughly digested this story, the Commodore took Mrs. Kapua and a couple of the cocoanuts to a shady nook near the upper pool, so that she might rest and refresh herself. Mrs. Spotfield’s court, and all the other men, returned to the women they had deserted. Mrs. Thornton asked Guy to go with her and help superintend Ah Lung, and iced drinks.

Frank and I were left alone.

"Isn't he the limit?" asked Frank in a disgusted tone.

But I myself thought the Commodore was doing very well. I appreciated his direct methods. It really couldn't be more than ten minutes since Mrs. Kapua had returned, and now they were lost to view in the verdure above.

"I'm sure I don't know what you mean; women admire him," I said briefly, and coldly.

"He might take with some types," Frank conceded.

"A handsome man, of fine presence, a man of wealth, travelled, cultured, a good talker,—I really don't know what more you want!"

"Well, we won't waste time talking of the Commodore, dear,—not when there's YOU."

"Oh, goodness!" I said, with the most careless of laughs, "I've heard nothing from Guy but ME, all the while you were off in the woods."

Frank looked troubled, so I resolved to harp upon this and I did, introducing effective variations of the original theme. Finally his brow cleared, so I hastened to add:

"We had a very interesting discussion on kisses."

Frank smiled and lit a cigarette.

"If he lives up to the well-known reputation of the sailor, he ought to be able to talk intelligently, at least, on the subject," he said.

“That sweetheart-in-every-port idea lacks originality,” I said.

“Truth is never original,” said Frank; “and neither are kisses.”

A thousand, or two, retorts flashed through my mind, but none seemed adequate.

“The originality is in the girl,” said Frank.

His gray eyes were very deep and soft, as they looked into mine. “And when you really care, there has never been any kiss before in all the world.”

I was glad I had not been ridiculous and undignified enough to show any feeling about Frank’s lengthy *tête-à-tête* with Mrs. Kapua, and I watched his cigarette smoke to the end, in a silence I had no desire to break.

“Guy Selby is the type,” resumed Frank, “that starts at a very tender age to lisp:

“The rose is red, the violet’s blue,
Sugar is sweet and so are you.”

Then he went into the Navy and now he has progressed to:

“One kind kiss before we part,
Drop a tear and bid adieu,
Tho’ we sever, my fond heart,
Till we meet, shall pant for you.”

I threw back my head and laughed. I really couldn’t help it. Frank’s imitation of Guy was so true that I could almost hear him reciting the

words, so that the implication Frank made only too clear, would be veiled in an impenetrable mist.

Frank, encouraged by my appreciation, went on to remark that various, and diverse, must be the kisses known to Guy in his travels. He said Guy ought to write a book and call it: 'Kisses I have met.' "

I had to laugh again; Guy certainly had recited a list of kisses.

"Chapter One: The Sister's Kiss," began Frank. "Chapter Two: The Cousin's Kiss. Chapter Three: The Friend's Kiss—"

"Chapter Four," I interposed. "Chapter Four: The Judas Kiss. Chapter Five: The Politic Kiss—your turn now;—Chapter Six?"

"Chapter Six: The Lover's Kiss.—That's equal to two chapters, of course."

"Chapter Seven: The Greeting Kiss. Chapter Eight: The Farewell Kiss."

"Chapter Nine: The French Kiss,—on either cheek, you see, also equal to two chapters."

"Chapter Ten: The Hawaiian Kiss,—in early days—just touching noses, you know."

"Pshaw, not much of a chapter," said Frank. "Chapter Eleven: The Confectioner's Kiss."

"Now look here, Frank," I said, "that sugary nothing does not count. Chapter Eleven,—let me see—"

"Chapter Eleven?" said Frank, "Chapter

Eleven: The Subtle Kiss." And he looked quite pleased with himself.

The subtle kiss—subtle? I had not thought of that. And Guy had certainly not mentioned anything like that in his list, comprehensive as it had appeared to be. Surely a subtle kiss was not usual. I'd never heard of one before. I could not think what it would be like. But it sounded queer, not exactly safe; it suggested experience. Funny that one of those should have occurred to Frank, just to-day.

"Well?" said Frank. "Your turn, you know."

"I've had enough of the game," said I. "Let's change the subject. How far did you walk with Mrs. Kapua?"

"Oh, not much farther than the Toll Bridge," said Frank. "Shall we go for a stroll?" he added. "Selby will be coming back; let's hide."

"No," I said shortly, "I'm tired."

Frank lit another cigarette and a silence fell between us.

It is remarkable how well Frank and I have always got along until we became engaged. Progression in love does not seem to go like lightning, unless it is forked lightning. If we continue like this, will we get married at all? Or, if we do, where will matrimony land us? I could almost hear Frank giving the old, unoriginal business excuse for late hours; I was even mad that he could not get up

a new apology; and I was altogether sure it was a pretext. All I could think of in regard to love in a cottage was the close proximity of the kitchen. Before, I used to think of the honeysuckle climbing up the front porch.

I had just decided that if I were a heroine, I would be about the middle of the book with my troubles, when Billy Barker and Mrs. Chandler, returning from their walk, stopped beside us,—perhaps with a charitable desire to cheer our apparent gloom.

“Me for Sunny Hawaii!” exclaimed Billy Barker, with an enthusiasm that testified to the success of Mrs. Thornton’s picnic.

“Fancy the joy of a walk through a real jungle of trees, and ferns, and vines, and not a snake!” said Mrs. Chandler, looking like a little French poster with her short skirt, coquettish shoes, and dashing hat.

“The Jungle of Joy!” cried Billy Barker.
“How’s that?”

Approval was manifested.

“We are going to christen your place, Mrs. Thornton,” said Billy, as she and Guy Selby came towards us, followed by Ah Lung and a couple of other boys, bearing big trays of deliciously cool drinks.

“Oh, where’s George? We’ve been waiting to find a suitable name; what is it?”

“The Jungle of Joy,—here’s to it!”

“The Jungle of Joy—lovely!” said Mrs. Thornton.

“The Jungle of Joy!” In vying tones of ecstasy the toast was given, with glasses held high, by Mrs. Spotfield and each of her court, Captain Bryce and the others of his group, Mrs. Kapua and the Commodore, who had just rejoined us, Mrs. Thornton, Guy, Frank,—

And me.

XVI.

“Who-o-o—, who-o-o—,” called Adrienne, as she came through the garden.

“Wh-o-o—, who-o-o-o—here I am,” I called back.

“I have come to tell you a secret,” said Adrienne, running up the steps.

“A secret? What is it?”

I was conscious of a pleasurable sensation which almost convinced me I was still young. I had felt old enough to be the mother of Adrienne and Céleste when, with Cherub Billkins and Teddy Skelton, they had returned to Mrs. Thornton’s merry picnickers, just in time to accompany us all home. But I could still thrill at the prospect of a secret.

“Tell me,” I persisted eagerly; “do sit down and tell me quick; I am crazy to hear it.”

“Didn’t I say it was a secret?” demanded Adrienne. “You don’t expect me to tell you here, do you? In this house, with verandas back and front? With everything opening into everywhere?”

“Oh, Adrienne,” I protested, “you can whisper it.”

Frank had managed to whisper the greatest secret in the world to me here, right here, in this very *lanai*. “There’s no one about except the Japs,” I continued, “and Tumi is not at home.”

“No,” said Adrienne firmly, “I know this, house. We had it one summer and Félicie said she

never once had a proposal in it. There was always a step outside at the critical moment. It is true that sometimes it was only a dog, or a chicken; once it was the baby pig we were fattening for a *luau*, but a pig is never romantic, even if it is a baby pig. Félicie said it was enough to discourage any man, and——”

“ But Adrienne——”

“ Come into the ocean,” said Adrienne, “ it is the only safe place. I brought my bathing suit; here it is.”

“ Goodness!” I cried disgustedly. “ I don’t want to wait that long.”

“ You must. It won’t take a jiffy without stockings. Come on.”

Adrienne was plainly determined. I went for the towels and followed her across the lawn.

“ Well, just give me a hint,” I called from my room, when we were undressing in the bath-house.

“ Once upon a time then,” called Adrienne back from hers, in the most approved fairy tale manner, “ a couple went for a stroll and—and, it is something I overheard them say at the picnic.”

“ Something you overheard——” Adrienne had gone towards the Toll Bridge, too.

“ Between a couple you would never suspect,—now that is all I’ll tell you.”

It was enough. My heart stood still and then went racing ahead, as though it were trying to keep pace with my thoughts.

Adrienne rambled on in a sort of half soliloquy

on the conventions. She said that Mr. Billkins abominated them; he thought it was absurd to wear stockings in bathing; he thought modesty was vague in its interpretation. Why was it improper to wear low neck in the water, and short skirts in the ball-room?

I refrained from pointing out to Adrienne that seldom did any one come to Honolulu who did not advance this idea as quite original.

Wherein lay the modesty of such flagrant inconsistency? That was the way Mr. Billkins said it; well put, wasn't it,—it took the Navy. Adrienne herself, while in a street car in New York, one rainy winter day, had caught her umbrella in her skirt and pulled it up farther above her knees than she cared to recall. In thinking it over afterwards though, she remembered that what concerned her most at the time was that she had on her woolen tights instead of her silk ones. And she had quite forgotten her legs. Oh, Mr. Billkins was certainly right about the vagaries of modesty.

I hurried and got into the water first. I wanted to be alone for a few moments. Once out, up to my neck in the surf, with the huge waves beyond breaking on the coral reef with a mighty roar, sweeping in and reaching me with a power that was spent, with the great expanse of wondrous blue ocean about me, with the greater vastness of heaven's blue above me, tiny atom of nothing that I was in the scheme of nature's infinitude, my doubts and fears, my

hopes and plans, seemed unimportant enough. They were unimportant. But, even as I tried to convince myself of this, I felt a pang, for whatever it is that makes up the sum of our strivings, a wise provision has made them seem worth while.

“Here I come.” Adrienne was wading in towards me, balancing herself with her arms. She was approaching slowly, against the tide, and her gait was reminiscent of a crab, and just about as graceful. When near me, she gave a little shiver, and ducked. She came up dripping. “Promise you won’t breathe it,” she said, “I am engaged to Lieutenant Warren Van Altyn Billkins.”

I stared at her. And gradually it dawned upon me that I had heard the secret.

“This is so sudden,” I said at last.

“You forget I have known him a whole week,” said Adrienne, with some dignity.

I kissed her impetuously, and wished her every happiness. A salty kiss it was, but even that seemed sweet to me. How silly I had been not to have guessed.

“Well, I thought his name was Cherub,” I began for want of something to say; my ideas seemed to have failed entirely.

However, Adrienne did not need ideas to start her, as she was full of the great news and all its important side issues. While we were bobbing up and down, with the ebb and swell of the waters, she told me it was a case of love at first sight and

Cherub had always said he hoped it would be that way with him, when he met the right girl. They were to be married soon; Céleste was to be her only bridesmaid; Léonie might come home to the wedding; there was no question that he was the dearest, and best, and handsomest, besides being one of the very finest officers ever known to the Service. And had I guessed, or was it a surprise?

I could assure her truthfully that it was a great surprise.

Adrienne went on to say that she was determined to keep her engagement secret, just because of that little cat of a Mrs. Spotfield. And when I asked what harm she could do, Adrienne assured me that nothing was impossible in the way of mischief, when a woman had blonde, and naturally curly, hair. Adrienne shook some drops of water off her own sleek, black tresses. The first time Mrs. Spotfield had seen Cherub Billkins with Adrienne, she had remarked to him that he was far from safe, and that the United States Navy of the future would undoubtedly trace every Admiral's genealogical tree back to a Singlee.

“As if we can help being a big family and all girls,” said Adrienne, “I suppose she thought that forewarned is forearmed, but she was too late for a case of love at first sight.”

Adrienne had sized Mrs. Spotfield up, and nothing I could say would change her opinion of her.

I thought myself that Mrs. Spotfield was a type

that had often before come to Honolulu, ahead of other ships, to await their uncertain orders. But I told Adrienne that perhaps Mrs. Spotfield did not really intend to be mean, as it sometimes appeared, so why not give her the benefit of the doubt?

But Adrienne was very firm about not allowing Mrs. Spotfield any benefit whatsoever, and said there could be no mistake about her; why, at the ball on the *California* when Ashton Waller, as a host, had gone off to introduce some strange girls, Mrs. Spotfield, waltzing by her as she sat alone and apparently partnerless, had called out: "Not dancing, Miss Singlee!" Adrienne's expression of utter disgust did not brighten when I laughed.

But a big wave, coming along at the moment, rolled right into my open mouth, and while I sputtered, and choked, and tried to recover my breath, and to regain my rather uncertain footing, Adrienne's amusement was quite as keen as if there were no Mrs. Spotfield at all. Finally I recovered, and Adrienne calmed down.

"But, I am having my revenge," she said, with what seemed like any other sweet seriousness of purpose. "I give her the age treatment."

"For goodness sake, Adrienne, what's that?" I cried. "It doesn't sound good to me."

"Oh, I just show her a deference due an older woman. I stand back to let her go first, help her when she goes up the ladders on the *California*,—you know, that sort of thing."

This might be vague, but I understood.

“She’s not young enough to be able to stand that!” said Adrienne with a consoling conviction.

Adrienne proceeded to tell me that she couldn’t see how in the world Billy Barker could be so attentive to Mrs. Spotfield, but of course between a grass widow and a married woman, he was so entirely safe, besides having the time of his life while they disposed of his leisure hours, which were about twenty-four a day.

“Poor little Céleste,” added Adrienne, shaking her head sadly.

I looked at her enquiringly.

“I don’t think it is fair to have Honolulu under the sway of three such women as Mrs. Chandler, Mrs. Spotfield, and Mrs. Kapua, a widow and a *kahuna!* Do you?”

Adrienne was waiting for my answer, so I assured her I did not.

“What chance is there for poor little Céleste against such a trio?” demanded Adrienne.

I could only show, by my sympathy, that I appreciated the prospect of struggle ahead for poor little Céleste.

“The fact is,” said Adrienne, “that after the Commodore goes, Mrs. Kapua will be idle, and that will be in November and about the time that Céleste will be coming out.”

Adrienne paused to let me digest the enormity of this, and I murmured my sympathy once more.

"Mrs. Kapua will naturally take a ship," continued Adrienne.

I could not help smiling, although goodness knows there was nothing funny about it in reality.

"She's handsome, of course," said Adrienne, "but it is not her beauty; it is her *kahuna* power. The rest of us can only be anxious and wear our best clothes, but she gets busy and prays a man to love; it's taking an unfair advantage, that's what it is. What chance is there against that? There's no use fighting a *kahuna* of love."

"But Adrienne, it is all nonsense." This sounded unconvincing enough. "It's just superstition."

"And as we know, she never fails," continued Adrienne. "You remember how it was before the Commodore came? There was Admiral Todley, and Captain Bates, and Lieutenant Commander—"

"Well, at least it is better than praying to death," I interposed, a noticeable lack of decision lingering in my voice.

"It is true that either way you lose him," Adrienne acceded sadly.

Our subject was uncanny, still I laughed at this and Adrienne joined in. But not heartily. She was a good sister and she could not forget her concern for Céleste.

For my part, I became lost in conjecture. If praying to death was accomplished by influencing

the victim's mind to such an extent that he would give up and die, just because there was some one wishing he would, I wondered if praying to love was brought about in the same manner. Why had I not, then, in my way, prayed Frank to love? Perhaps there was many an unconscious pair of lovers that had prayed each other into plighting their troth that never knew about *kahunas* at all. Maybe—

"The only way is to give him up gracefully before she puts on her red gown and takes him," said Adrienne.

"Oh dear, let's forget Mrs. Kapua," I said somewhat impatiently.

"But we can't, you know," said Adrienne, with a mournful conviction.

She patted the little waves, as they danced along between us, sparkling merrily, chasing each other untiringly, running playfully before a variable breeze that brought with it smells of the sea, of fish, and seaweed, and the salt freshness that came in whiffs from afar.

I shivered, although the waters were so warm, and we swam out a bit and back again, for the exercise.

"And," said Adrienne, regaining her footing after considerable splashing, but not waiting to recover her breath, "and it is about time for Mrs. Kapua to stop using all her *kahunaism* for love and work it to find Mrs. Thornton's diamonds."

"I think so, too," I said.

"That little cat of a Mrs. Spotfield, you know——?"

I knew.

"Well, she said to Billy Barker, right before me, that both the Commodore and Frank Alden must naturally feel uncomfortable until the diamonds were found, in spite of the Commodore's wealth, and as for the Commodore's wife, when she stopped to remember that she had a husband at all, she probably felt uncomfortable too. But Billy Barker said this showed a memory was not all that it was cracked up to be, and he added: 'I'm so glad that you don't tie a string around your finger, Mrs. Spotfield.' I held my breath really, but Mrs. Spotfield actually laughed and seemed to take it as a compliment; did you ever!"

"Did—did she say anything else about the diamonds?" I asked.

"Oh, she talked on in that playful way, you know, as if she were still a kitten. So Cherub and I have decided not to tell of our engagement until we invite Mrs. Spotfield to the wedding. Cherub agrees with me that the shorter the time she has to play with our characters, the better."

"Let's get out," I said suddenly; "I'm cold."

I had made up my mind that gossip was going a little too far. It must have reached an alarming stage indeed, when a stranger in our midst would dare even imply that a man like Frank, a man known to the community from boyhood, a respected citizen,

could be uneasy, could conceive of the possibility of his name being connected with a theft. It was preposterous. Yet it was disquieting.

Mrs. Thornton had suggested a way. It was time to take that way. Frank did not know, and he must not know, the reason,—such a reason,—for announcing our engagement. But I must act. Romance and secrecy were not for us. I determined to have a serious talk with Frank and have everything settled. I almost felt as if I couldn't get dressed in time for it, I was in such a hurry.

Adrienne took somewhat longer and when she joined me in the *lanai*, she looked as fresh and unmussed as if she had just stepped out of a bandbox. That is one of the Singlee charms. They always look like that. Their perfect belts, and collars, their spotless white dresses, their sleek hair, and altogether fresh and dainty appearance, never fails, no matter what the circumstances. At a picnic, or a ball, on a dry day, or a muddy one, it is all the same to the Singlees.

I put my arm around Adrienne, as she was leaving, and I suppose my heart was in my voice when I said:

“I hope there will be no cloud to shadow your engagement, dear.”

Adrienne clung to me, and said fervently:

“Not if I see her first!”

Adrienne had pluck; she would not fail in the application. But of course Mrs. Spotfield was mere woman.

It seemed a long time before Frank came. I did not ask what had detained him. Instead, I said that anticipation had grown to be so beautiful, that I could not think him late. And I gave him a cup of tea.

For I had decided that there might be more ways of praying a man to love than I had ever dreamt of before I needed philosophy, "feeding the brute" being one of them.

Frank was fairly beaming, but I was fast sinking into a gloom so hopeless that it could be traceable only to conscience, or indigestion. I traced it easily enough and knew that I could have been cheerful even with ptomaine poisoning, in comparison with the stings that had assailed me now. I didn't like my borrowed methods; I couldn't bear to play a part with Frank. I was deliberately working to get him into a resistless, and putty-like state. There's a nice line drawn between the tactful and the smooth, and I felt as if I'd lost the line. What was the reason for all this subterfuge anyway?

So, when Frank asked me why I was so pensive, I told him I did not like the idea of a secret engagement.

Frank said all engagements started by being secret.

I conceded that this was true, but ours was quite an old story.

And Frank said that love was always the same, old story.

It was plain we were arriving nowhere.

“Frank,” I said, in a sort of cuddling tone, a combination of lightness, and playfulness, “I’m ready to announce our engagement now; so we will if you like, shall we?”

“No,” said Frank. “Certainly not. Not now.” And I was conscious of the firmness of his tone.

Of all the responses that entered my head, each seemed more undignified than the one before. It was quite impossible for me to plead for an announcement which any lover ought to be proud, and impatient, to make. Why did Frank want, why did he even tolerate this secrecy?

I remained silent.

“We can be as true to each other, if no one knows we are engaged,” said Frank. “I have no patience with the idea that publicity makes a tie more binding.”

“I am not trying to get a hold on you, you know,” I said with a laugh that might be called modulated, or perhaps calculated; it was quite musical—though brief.

Frank laughed too, and assured me that I could not get hold of him that way.

I remarked that I supposed an engagement could hold him.

He replied that it could not;—only love could hold him. If the love ceased, the engagement would, or should.

“An engagement is a term of probation,” said Frank, “and it is that when it is public, as well

as when it is not. If you take pleasure in the society of another, if he could interest you,—why not quite as much when the world knows you are not free? I certainly would not wish to have it known that you were engaged to me for the purpose of terminating the attentions of a man like Selby, for instance. If it amuses you to listen to him, I am more than willing."

I was conscious of the first glow since my swim.

"An engagement should be sacred," said Frank. "It can be so only if there is perfect trust—and that trust is not tried too far."

The tables were certainly turning; I assented sweetly and added: "Up to a certain point, of course."

"What point?" demanded Frank.

His tone suggested a dagger's point, and it took me a moment to adjust my line of argument. "Up to the point of blinding oneself; one should of course keep one's poise. One should not get past the stage of being able to see the attraction of another man."

Frank got up and paced the floor.

"If you go hunting for an attraction," he said at last, with a lightness quite elaborate, "you are apt to meet an affinity."

"That's it," I assented, in a tone replete with the satisfaction of being understood.

Frank looked at me, and I returned the look.

We talked about the weather.

At last, having agreed to accept the statement

of the weather-man, in spite of any lingering doubt either of us might have harbored, this subject was exhausted.

Frank consulted his watch and said he had to keep track of the time, as he was going on the *Gelda* to a poker game.

"I've never had a chance to be there when a game was on. The Commodore doesn't ask me to play, of course; money is an important factor, when you play with him, and it is not hard to find out who has wealth in Honolulu."

Frank was warming to his subject. After all, he had a good disposition. This was being really generous. He was jealous and I had not tried to make him less so. I had not been nice. But he was magnanimous. I would be too.

"Well, there's one thing sure, Frank," I said, "there's no harm done, as the Chandlers ask only the rich to play."

"No doubt it is soothing to the conscience to rob only those who can afford it," said Frank.

I shook my finger at him. "That's putting it too strong! If the Commodore is so clever an opponent that he is almost sure to win, no one is forced to join in his game."

Frank said nothing further. And I did not speak either; I just enjoyed feeling that we were once more in accord.

"But you say you are not invited to play; how are you going?" I asked, as the thought struck me.

"Oh, Mrs. Kapua is going to take me," he said.

A few moments later, Frank and I parted rather coldly.

I began to believe I was jealous of Mrs. Kapua. Jealousy was so new to me that I hadn't really recognized it before. True, there wasn't much cause before. Now that the cause was so apparent, I was beginning to see the effect, that was all. I might as well look the position square in the face. Frank was attentive to Mrs. Kapua, although engaged to me. He did not want to announce our engagement. There were two distinct, and indisputable facts. Why Frank should wish for secrecy when most men are crazy to shout their happiness from the house tops, I could of course only conjecture. But my jealousy of Mrs. Kapua had nothing to do with the inevitable conclusion. Calm reason, and good common sense, would sift it to the same result. This being beyond dispute, what was I to do?

Frank was in danger and I had it in my power to save, or at least to help him. But it would be at a sacrifice of my pride, and my dignity. I could not lower myself so far as to beg him to acknowledge that he belonged to me, in the face of his plainly spoken objections.

I recalled the objections; they had seemed such lovely ones. But now they appeared to be just one, alas! lovely too,—and a *kahuna!* Not being superstitious, I do not exactly believe in *kahunas* myself, but the doubt of one skeptic like me could not weaken her sway.

Well then, to sum it up, I was jealous. But with

cause. I was not blindly jealous, because I was able to see that it might be all her fault. Mrs. Kapua is descended from a time when, history tells us, her ancestors were careless children of nature. This used to sound quite attractive to me—as history. With child-like candor they had loved where they pleased, and as often. I, as an adopted daughter of the Islands, knew my rival—a real daughter. And I knew that to-day, when convention has modified the easy pliability of earlier times, her fascination is but the more potent, and the more lasting.

I could be liberal up to a certain degree; I had been liberal with Frank. His life began, for me, when he became engaged to me. All before that, was his own. I had no sympathy with a jealousy of the past, I had no right to question it; and if I had assumed the right, I should have done so with the conviction that it was only prying. But the present was different; it was mine.

I rose from the hammock in which I had been swinging, and went to my room. I shut the door and looked long, and hard, in the mirror, a triple mirror, movable in each of its three divisions to insure the perfect portrayal of each bad, or good, point. I saw only the bad ones. I left the mirror and hastened to remind myself that there was always magnetism to fall back on, and inner qualities unknown to a triple mirror.

But, my mind did not linger on these. For I began to think of Mrs. Kapua, her voice, her eyes,

her grace—her very name: *Leialoha*, Wreath of Love, as though to sum up the total of her charm, a charm that was not to be denied. I could see it; why shouldn't Frank?

Still, why not believe that she was a temporary infatuation of Frank's,—perhaps only a fancy.

Suddenly, I remembered all the years when Frank had seemed to care for me alone, and for Mrs. Kapua, or any one else, not at all. I gazed at my beautiful ring; its sparkle was constant. Inanimate as it was, by the very nature of its worth, it was unchangeable and true; it was a symbol. And yet, I had doubted Frank, constant and loyal though he had ever been. And at the first provocation. I had never questioned his devotion to me before. Now, when he needed me, was I to fail him? I thought of that need. How great it was, and how little he realized it. If Mrs. Thornton's diamonds were never found, would he perhaps always linger under a cloud? My own diamonds seemed to answer: "Yes." A hard, short, decisive yes.

If Frank were in the danger I feared for him, why had I not been afraid to wear these valuable stones, his gift? Why had I not considered the possibility of a suspicion concerning their purchase? It had never occurred to me that an unjust world could lay up evidence so false, because I had been so wrapped up in my own small, jealous worries. I was ready to blame the prejudiced Public for daring to doubt his honesty and yet I, the woman he

loved and who loved him, had suspected him of something quite as unworthy. In other words, I was no more true to Frank, or his interests, than the merest acquaintance. And, after all, what had he done? Had he spent more time with Mrs. Kapua than I had with Guy Selby? Was she more dangerous in my estimation than Guy was in his?

Resolutely I put Mrs. Kapua and all thought of her varied attractions aside, and replaced the consciousness of their power with a determined trust in my own, after all the greatest power in the world—the power of love. Through that power I could, and I would, shield the man I loved from slander.

How far the slander had gone, I could only surmise, but Mrs. Thornton would help me ferret out the worst. I could depend on her. She would be likely to hear, more than any one else, everything in connection with her loss; and she would advise me with a real interest in Frank's welfare.

I took a long, a deep breath. With the force of my reasoning, I had been able to shake jealousy to its very foundation. I could already see it totter, and fall. Being just human, I felt that it would be good to shake Mrs. Kapua herself, but of course metaphorically too.

I was no longer jealous of Frank. But I still appreciated Mrs. Kapua.

XVII.

MRS. THORNTON was sitting in her *lanai*, with a big blank book on her knee. She explained to me, with some pride, her method of book-keeping and told me that George had said she should be a Queen of Finance.

Under headings of luncheons, dinners, picnics, suppers, breakfasts, teas, swimming parties, in fact any and every function possible to a hostess, she had arranged various menus for stipulated numbers of guests and annexed comprehensive lists for the butcher, the grocer, the baker, and all other tradesmen who might be called upon to contribute their wares to the feasts. She further informed me that so systematized were her entertainments, that she could even gauge each invited appetite, if not exactly individually, at least generically. She knew when beer was advisable, and whether by the pint or the keg, when champagne was to flow, or to pour, and when temperance and mineral waters were apt to be in the ascendant. With an intuitive application, she fitted the entrée to the consumer, from frogs' legs to minced-any-old-thing in shells. She had learned where to be generous with plover and who would never think the wild duck from the Coast under-done. She had decided that floral decorations should reflect the spirit of the occasion and that forget-me-nots and baby roses for a native feast would be as out of place as the scarlet poinciana, or

the tropical bougainvillæa, for a debutante lunch. She turned the pages, and each was an inspiration.

It really was not an inappropriate moment to tell her that I was engaged to Frank, for it was as much the æsthetic as the material that absorbed her interest and, above all, was an element of romance, her incentive being her husband's admiration for her business methods.

It took Mrs. Thornton an instant to catch my meaning. I could see the understanding creep into her pretty eyes, as they grew brighter, and bluer, and softer. She threw down the book and took me in her arms,—oh, so gently, different from the usual way, different from any way I'd ever known. I could think of nothing but a mother's brooding, tender love.

“Oh, my dear, my dear—I knew it was only the lack of money that kept you apart,” she said, with a pleased little laugh.

I leaned my head against her and I felt as if the accumulation of tears that had been lurking restrained about my jealous imaginings, tears that I had been too proud to shed, were crowding up into my eyes.

“I'll give a dinner to announce it,” said Mrs. Thornton at last, as I mopped my eyes and told her how happy I was.

“Not now; we're not going to announce it yet,” I said.

“Not going to announce it!” cried Mrs. Thorn-

ton. "Oh, where is all my good advice? What on earth are you going to keep it a secret for, when its design is to afford an object lesson to the population?"

I didn't care much for the word design, but I didn't stop to argue that.

"Have you heard anything more? Any talk, gossip, slander,—anything that could possibly hurt Frank?" I asked anxiously, coming without further delay to the real object of my visit. "There wouldn't be much said about him before me, I suppose,—we've always been such friends,—but you, you would be more likely to hear things. Have you? Tell me, please tell me; I don't want to be kept in the dark, if people are talking about the man I am going to marry."

"Don't worry," said Mrs. Thornton, "I've heard nothing worth repeating; I've caught the merest hints, here and there, that's all. And perhaps I've imagined harm where none has been intended, just because I am constantly on the watch nowadays, as you are. Either you, or I, would scent danger even before it threatened."

"That's so," I murmured, somewhat comforted.

"On the other hand," said Mrs. Thornton, "on the other hand, there's sure to be plenty of gossip going on that doesn't reach me. We must remember that we are not the only clique in Honolulu, small as the town may be."

"I do remember; there are lots of calls I should

have paid for the sake of diplomacy," I said regretfully. "I used to have two pages of Bs, for instance, and now I have only six Bs altogether, and one of those is the Basiltons, who have gone. I suppose all the others are down on me."

"Scratch not your visiting list, lest you be scratched," rejoined Mrs. Thornton promptly. "Well, it is a good thing to realize we are in the hands of our bowing acquaintances, so we can, at least, cultivate a cordial bow. Take my advice though; announce your engagement and start a discussion on different lines. Give people an excuse to calculate your age, and let them do their worst on that. After they have threshed out your years and added a few, and discussed Frank's bank account and subtracted some, then you and he can settle down into happiness and obscurity."

"Oh, don't joke," I pleaded.

"But I am not joking, my dear."

"I—we—don't care to have it get out just yet. I, I mean we,—we are going to wait until we know when we are to be married."

A marked shadow of disapproval settled like a cloud over Mrs. Thornton's expressive face. She said nothing for a moment. And then very quietly: "Of course you know your own business best."

"You *have* heard something!" I cried, with quickly aroused apprehension.

"No, really,—nothing new; but the conditions are the same; whether we exaggerate them or not,

there is at least no reason for secrecy; it's not like you to want it. It is not like you to flirt with another man, as you are unmistakably doing, when your promise has been given, unless you are having a good time and don't want it to stop. But, it's in the air; frivolity and lightness float in it, in the languor, and softness, and perfume, and warmth. We're too lazy to resist and we bask in the sunshine of life and bloom into flowers of ease; then a butterfly, like Guy Selby, hovers into view." Mrs. Thornton shrugged her shoulders.

My eyes filled with tears. "Oh, do you really think that of me?" I cried.

But I could not stay hurt, for Mrs. Thornton's repentance was quick and genuine.

"No," she said. "No, I don't really think that of you; forgive me, dear. It did cross my mind to suspect you and then what I was saying sounded so good to me that I kept on." She laughed and patted my hand. "Why, I flirt with Guy Selby myself," she added. "He's a fascinating, irresistible love of a boy, but I don't believe he's touched your heart, or even your vanity, or that he has anything whatever to do with the secret engagement. So, let's forget him. And now tell me all about it."

I forgot my troubles in the recital of my happiness. I introduced Mrs. Thornton to Frank's many virtues, as if she had never met Frank himself. Her ready sympathy drew me on, and on, and finally in the pleasure of showing her my ring which I had

brought with me, and listening to her admiring comments, I even forgot that I had ever floated off the rosy cloud of Frank's dream into a gray mist of my own.

It was very easy up to a certain point, but when it came to explaining the secrecy, which sounded after all like school-girl folly, and repeating Frank's pleas in favor of romance, I faltered, and after a few hesitating words my voice died away in silence. I felt like a hypocrite; it seemed but a half confidence I was giving; Mrs. Thornton was too true a friend for me not to be perfectly honest; still I could not do Frank such an injustice as to confide my jealous suspicions,—besides they were in the past.

“Frank is perfectly right!” cried Mrs. Thornton, a tender note in her voice, a softening mist in her blue eyes. “Enjoy your beautiful romance while you may; it is a time in a girl's life that can never come again.”

I looked up in some surprise; this was certainly a change of front.

“Well, now you can have Frank all to yourself,” she said in explanation; “but all the world loves a lover, you know.”

I couldn't help thinking that there might be safety in numbers, however I hastened to say:

“Oh, inconsistency thy name is woman! Are the conditions not still the same?”

“Yes, but there is another side,” said Mrs.

Thornton, "we may be making a mountain out of a mole hill. The situation is just this: Frank and the Commodore were with me when I lost my pin. I know it was only lost; so do you. There is, however, some question of it being stolen and we will admit, for the sake of argument, that either of the two men with me, at the time of its disappearance, might be suspected. The Commodore's wealth and high standing, is pitted against Frank's popularity. Of course the chances are not even, popularity being an uncertain quality. But, on the other hand, Frank is too well known amongst us for people to come out openly with an accusation of such a nature. Therefore, if there are insinuations, as we suspect, they are likely to remain covert. Although unpleasant, this is not serious. There's absolutely no evidence against Frank, and if there should be any one to hunt up trouble for him, there is no one to prosecute, so the affair would die a natural death. If my pin is never found, the whole matter will be forgotten—except by ourselves of course—it's a nine days' wonder."

"But—" I began.

"It's true," Mrs. Thornton interposed, "it's true I did think it might go too far to be comfortable, and I thought your engagement might interrupt any possible slander and divert interest in Frank into another and more pleasant channel. But, I've heard nothing further. Mrs. Kapua seems really fond of Frank, and would do him no harm,

I'm sure, and I really see no reason for you to be forced into spoiling your romance yet; there's time enough."

I moved uncomfortably. An insistent, cloying sweetness, of which I had been half conscious all the time, hung upon the air and seemed to have permeated insidiously every pore of my being, until it was like a subtle poison at work. I looked around. A *lei* of ylang ylang was tied about one of the posts of the *lanai*.

Mrs. Thornton followed my glance.

"Sweet, isn't it?" she commented. "So many of the native girls were selling ylang ylang this morning; it must be at the height of its bloom."

I refrained from telling her that I hated the perfume. But I did say that I thought it somewhat too strong for good taste, and I really did not see how Mrs. Kapua could wear it, as she did.

Mrs. Thornton agreed that it was certainly tropical.

"I propose that we go to see Mrs. Kapua and try to find out, from her, what people are saying," she continued. "She knows every one and if there's anything going on, she always hears it first."

This struck me as a good idea, and I brightened up. I had felt far from satisfied, although Mrs. Thornton's arguments had been reassuring. I had been quieted for a moment only. Mrs. Spotfield's remark was rankling and I repeated to Mrs. Thornton what she had said about Frank being uneasy

until the diamonds were recovered; it did seem as if insinuation could go no farther.

Mrs. Thornton's eyes flashed, and she rose to her feet, determination in every movement.

"Come on!" she said, in a tone that suggested: "My kingdom for a horse!"

"Shan't we telephone to see if she is at home?" I asked.

"Certainly not," she replied, with decision; "that would attach far too much importance to our visit; we don't want her to think, for a moment, that we are in the slightest concerned. We will drop in and introduce our subject casually; if she's out, we can go again."

It didn't take Mrs. Thornton long to put on her hat and to leave a message with Suki, for Mr. Thornton, to say where she had gone. But, when she was ready, she remembered that she had not ordered the carriage, and the automobile was in the garage for repairs.

"We will walk," she said. "It is not too far; we'll take the short cut."

The short cut led us to the back entrance of Mrs. Kapua's house, but it was quite as usual to enter that way and walk through her garden to the *lanai*, as to use the front gate. In fact, like most of our houses, it could be approached from north, south, east, or west. I have often wondered what kind of a sentinel poor Sister Anne would have made in Honolulu; she would have required an

assistant, beyond a doubt. No wonder we have the reputation for hospitality; the message of "Out" at the front door is a rare luxury, for it is too apt to meet with its contradiction at the back.

The vines shading Mrs. Kapua's *lanai* were exuberant in growth, but they were not of a uniform thickness, and as we drew near on the footpath, I could see through them that a figure was moving; it was indistinct, like a shadow, still some one was there and some one was walking across the *lanai*, as our approach was heralded by the crunching of the pebbles under our feet.

We found Mrs. Kapua alone; she was seated on a short wicker sofa, softly sweeping the strings of her *ukulele* with her supple fingers. Just beyond reach of her foot, a chair was rocking in its sheltered corner; certainly no breeze was responsible; it might have been hurriedly vacated. There was nothing hurried about Mrs. Kapua and her position of graceful relaxation.

She greeted us without rising and seated us with a gesture. And I wondered if she was going to adopt this as a pose; some one had perhaps pointed out to her that it held a peculiar attraction. It was a greeting of quiet charm that forced comparison with the too usual bustling reception.

I really don't know what we would do without our wonderful climate of perpetual summer; it is as useful a topic as the weather in all climes, although if there are four seasons, there is of course

a diversity of which we cannot boast. But there is nothing like it here, or anywhere, for an entering wedge. While Mrs. Kapua and Mrs. Thornton inserted it, I looked brightly intelligent and became even animated, when they referred to the trade wind.

It did not reach Mrs. Kapua's *lanai*, however, and the air was heavy with the sickish sweet scent of the ylang ylang; a vase near Mrs. Kapua was full of the greenish, curled-up blossoms. There was one fastened in her dark hair and, strange to say, it was becoming in spite of its trying tint. But flowers are a part of Mrs. Kapua. They seem to partake of her bloom, as she does of theirs, and no matter where, or how, she wears them, in the sunshine or the cool of evening, for an elaborate adjunct to a ball gown, or as a single flower carelessly pinned to her *holoku*, with her they keep unfaded to the last.

"I never get tired of the sunshine eh," said Mrs. Kapua. "I don't even mind the glare. I love the old ocean when she sparkles, and shines, and fairly dazzles one with the reflection."

"Oh, that reminds me of my diamonds," said Mrs. Thornton promptly. "Where, oh where, are they sparkling now?"

We were startled.

"I won't know a happy moment until they are found," declared Mrs. Kapua. "I find myself unconsciously suspecting each of my servants, faithful as they have proved themselves to be, and when I

walk through the house, I search the floor at every step, although I know how thoroughly we have hunted."

"I really came to talk it all over with you," said Mrs. Thornton, with simple candor.

It's wonderful how frank one always appears when guile is pointing the way.

"I don't want you to feel responsible because my pin was lost in your house; it is not fair. Really, Mrs. Kapua, I wish you wouldn't bother any more. Please dismiss it from your mind."

"But I can't eh," cried Mrs. Kapua. "Everywhere I go, everywhere I turn, whoever comes here, it is the subject of discussion; nothing else is talked of; it is a mystery of absorbing interest."

There was a moment's pause. I, for one, could think of nothing to say.

"Oh pshaw, it is not the first case of mysterious disappearance," said Mrs. Thornton lightly. "The fact is, Honolulu has nothing else to talk about."

"Yes, that's it eh," said Mrs. Kapua.

The subject was in momentary danger of being dropped.

"And amidst all the talk, what is there new to say?" Mrs. Thornton began again.

"Nothing new, of course," Mrs. Kapua agreed.

Mrs. Thornton leaned towards her, a light in her eyes, determination lurking about her mouth. "I want you to help me hush the whole matter up, Mrs. Kapua. I don't like the way it has become

the sole subject of conversation ; it was all very well until outsiders began to say that the diamonds were not lost, but stolen. It is possible we are allowing an ugly suspicion to grow. You've heard the rumors ; don't you think this silly gossip has gone far enough? ”

“ Yes,” said Mrs. Kapua, “ it has gone far enough.”

This was not reassuring.

“ I am as ready as you are to hush it up,” she continued. “ When discussion becomes hot, there is danger for some one.”

“ For some one,” I repeated.

I had been all this time trying to steady my voice, and I gave a little yawn which emphasized a semblance of indifference, of which I might well be proud.

“ I look at it this way,” said Mrs. Thornton. “ It would of course be natural to suspect either of the two men alone with me when my pin disappeared, were not the one a man of great wealth, and the other of unquestioned honesty. But, absurd as it undoubtedly is, in this case, there has been as usual some one to start a scandal. Now, are we going to let it spread until it gets abroad? Frank Alden is a Harvard graduate, with friends everywhere from San Francisco to New York, in Europe, in Japan—and although he is an Island boy, a *kamaaina*, a scandal about him would not be merely a local one. Our boast of being as

one big family would indeed be blasted if we could accuse him. On the other hand, take the Commodore; even were he poor, and possible as a suspect, he is a stranger visiting our land for the first time, a land with a world-wide reputation for hospitality. Could we let the world know that this generous spirit was built on such treacherous ground, that we could turn on the stranger and subject him to insult? In either case, it seems to me, the ignominy would be ours. We must think up a way, Mrs. Kapua,—you and I. We will work together.”

Mrs. Thornton had spoken with enthusiastic persuasion.

Mrs. Kapua sat forward, her cheeks ablaze, her eyes aglow; never had she looked more beautiful.

“Think of injustice in Hawaii! You are right. We will work together, work for the *aloha* of *Hawaii nei*, the *aloha* that breathes the spirit of the Islands,—love, harmony, welcome, the *aloha* that follows the *kamaaina*, and calls him, and draws him, and brings him back to us, no matter where he may wander. *Aloha eh.*”

Oh, the tenderness, the softness, the abandon, in Mrs. Kapua’s rich, low tones, merging into a melting, caressing whole! Was it love of country that aroused such wealth of feeling, that brought voice and eyes into such yielding beauty?

From the garden rang the loud laugh of the Commodore, through the vines floated a monosyllabic utterance in Frank’s well-known voice; on the pebbles sounded the crunching of heavy feet.

Mrs. Kapua did not rise as the two men ran up the steps and stood before us. She took her little *ukulele* from its resting place in her lap and placed it at the head of the sofa, only big enough for two, on which she was sitting. The fold of her skirt, covering its short length, she did not move aside.

“*Aloha, aloha,*” she said, as though the echo were still in her heart.

My own prim, cold “How do you do?” suffered perceptibly in comparison.

Even if Frank had telephoned, after I left home, and found me gone, did he have to take—to *seize*—this opportunity to call upon HER!

The *ukulele* on Mrs. Kapua’s skirt, shining, inlaid little trifle though it seemed, was a weight for the folds so carelessly thrown across the rest of the sofa; it threatened to fall, as Frank brushed against it to make way for the Commodore to approach, and Mrs. Kapua involuntarily steadied it with her hand. Her position was, for her, almost a studied one. There was a tenseness in her quiet immovability, just a shade different from her customary relaxation. Was it possible that anything could be concealed under the white, double fold of her skirt. She had not been alone when we came; some one had left her,—perhaps forgotten his hat in a hurried exit. The Commodore and Frank held theirs, as they stood, side by side, near her.

How different, even opposite they were in type! The Commodore, burly, suave, handsome, bold, a

hail-fellow-well-met man, full of the assurance of prosperity, one who would have been self-made through push, and luck, who would have won a hap-hazard fortune, if inheritance hadn't stepped in and taken all the honor.

And Frank, a happy combination of the athletic and the studious, wiry, quick, alert, honest, full of energy and decision, with firm mouth, thoughtful brow, keen gray eyes, with body and brain alive, nervous, a man to pursue success and to storm it, and at the last to win a victory that would be enduring.

But, unlike in type as they might be, they were in appearance, far from individual, each in white duck, each with a single ylang ylang on the lapel of his coat, each holding in his left hand a white straw hat, the exact counterpart of the other. Such is man; revelling in his freedom from convention, yet bound, hand and foot, to a uniformity of dress.

The ylang ylang, however, was no part of convention. The wearing of it was a coincidence,—a curious coincidence. Of course the native women down town who sit in rows along the sidewalk, stringing *leis* for sale, their baskets of flowers beside them, might have tempted the passer-by with their profusion of these strongly perfumed flowers, at times a scarcity on the market. Mrs. Thornton had succumbed. But—even admitting that—

“Just in time eh,” said Mrs. Kapua, after we

had all exchanged greetings and expressed mutual surprise and pleasure at our meeting.

Both Frank and the Commodore wanted to know what she meant, what was due them because of this accidental punctuality, and Mrs. Kapua declared they were equally ungallant not to guess; was their visit not most opportune? With her gesture she included Mrs. Thornton, herself and me.

The Commodore said that in spite of their good fortune in finding three lovely ladies together, he might have guessed, from the time of day, that she had referred to tea. And Mrs. Kapua laughingly acknowledged that one guess was as good as the other.

"And where did you two meet?" I asked, with cordial interest.

"At the back; we came through the garden that way," explained Frank.

This much had been easy to surmise.

"I don't know what we would do, here in Honolulu, if it were not for our convenient back gates!" said Mrs. Thornton.

But one's remarks luckily, or unluckily, have no acoustic properties to betray an echo.

"How gay you look eh; each with a boutonnière," said Mrs. Kapua. "Why didn't you wait and let me decorate you?"

The Commodore glanced up at the vase near her. "I see you have an extra supply. I wish that

I had waited; the *wahine* who pinned this on for me was no beauty; I can assure you of that."

Mrs. Kapua laughed. "Oh Commodore," she said.

Frank's eyes were on her, so he did not see my quick look in his direction. I must confess that it had occurred to me that she might have divided her bouquet with at least one of her visitors; it was scarcely probable that both men had purchased the same flower that Mrs. Kapua happened to be wearing.

"I have never seen you without flowers, Mrs. Kapua," the Commodore went on to say. "I believe you sleep in a garden bed."

"Not quite that; but I have to live up to my name, you know."

"Ka-pua, the flower," said the Commodore slowly, "but that is only annexed; you mean your first name, *Leialoha*; *Lei-Aloha*; Wreath of Love."

Certainly the Commodore had been an apt scholar. And he was not reticent about his tuition. If he had been calling on Mrs. Kapua when we came, even supposing his frequent visits to her might make his wife seem conspicuous by her absence, would he have evaded us, forgotten his hat in a hurried flight and returned with a borrowed one? Wouldn't it be more likely for him to stay in the first place and bluff it out? Still, some one had left Mrs. Kapua when he saw us coming; that, at least, was not conjecture.

"Sit down and look as if you felt at home," suggested Mrs. Kapua.

The Commodore, still holding his hat, sank into the chair near him, and Frank, also holding his hat, pushed up an arm chair with his unoccupied hand. It appeared to be rather heavy; with two hands it could have been more easily moved; it might have been natural to have laid down his hat,—just the usual straw hat.

It is true that its very similarity, every man's being so like every other man's in Honolulu, is conducive to frequent mix-ups; in fact, stories of the interchanging, whether by accident or design, of the headgear of men in Hawaii, have a wide and dangerous range and even expurgated to suit a conservative taste, they would fill a book. So it is often the wise man who holds on to his own; but, also, it is the wise man who does not have to, but who, like Frank, always has a mark of identification inside.

Mrs. Kapua has a hatrack on her back veranda, and although it tells no tales, it is only reasonable to presume that it could. I have never seen it empty; two or three of its pegs, at least, are always in use. Mrs. Kapua has explained that she needs a suggestion of man about the house, the beach of course being public, and she being in reality alone. So her hatrack is by way of protection.

But—but, it might also prove an accommodation.

Mrs. Thornton was in the midst of an exchange of compliments with the Commodore when, with a startled exclamation, I rushed across to Frank and seizing his hat from his grasp, I flicked an imaginary insect from its brim.

"Ugh! Horrid thing!" I said with a shudder.

Mrs. Thornton, after the manner of woman, jumped out of her chair, ready to jump on it. But Mrs. Kapua, after the more serene manner of Hawaii, remained seated and merely laid her hand on the neck of her *ukulele*. The Commodore and Frank sprang to my rescue.

And it was a tense moment while all, with some show of excited interest, waited for my explanation and I tried to make up my mind between a centipede and an inchworm. For, although a centipede might hasten out of sight on his hundred legs, an inchworm is lost with less concern.

"Don't bother, don't bother," I murmured.

"That's one advantage we have on the *Gelda*," said the Commodore, "lying a bit off, as she is, we escape your husky, if harmless, insects."

I had decided on the inchworm and in an animated account of how I had counted nearly three-quarters of a yard before its pale green activity got on my nerves, I turned Frank's hat over and looked in the crown.

And not on impulse did I perpetrate this bit of detective work either, but with a cold, or at least cool, premeditation. I did not deceive myself; I

knew that I was no better than the weak sister who, actuated by jealous suspicion, opens a letter not addressed to herself.

“Rash man! Where is your name?” I asked in a tone intended to be light.

“Name!” cried the Commodore. “Well, I hope he’s not as rash as all that! It’s far better never to trace your own hat than to have it trace you.”

“Oh, but Commodore, you’ll have to come to it. Every man in Honolulu does.” Mrs. Kapua’s tone was careless as was her position.

Frank looked at me with some concern, even with anxiety. “Don’t you like it? It’s a brand new one; I bought it to-day. The crown is narrower, only a little—you’d hardly notice it——”

My expression had probably not been one to suggest enthusiasm.

The Commodore heaved a deep sigh. “Is this the way you treat the thirsty wayfarer, Mrs. Kapua?”

She laughed indulgently. “Here comes Yone with tea eh,” she said.

Yone placed the tea table in front of her mistress.

On the pebble walk was the crunching of feet; laughter and voices sounded through the garden.

And I knew that callers might come and callers might go, but Mrs. Kapua would sit there forever, —at least if we stayed that long.

XVIII.

As Frank left Mrs. Kapua's with us, Mrs. Thornton and I had no chance to discuss our visit and its possible outcome. As for me, I spent the evening, in a chastened spirit, embroidering a new hat band for Frank. I might be jealous, but I was not unreasonable, and when I learned that Frank had followed me from my house to Mrs. Thornton's, and then to Mrs. Kapua's, and when with a few judicious questions, I further learned that he had borrowed a flower from the *lei* on Mrs. Thornton's *lanai*, while waiting for Suki to open the door, I had once more put two and two together, and with far more satisfactory results than before. Perhaps before I had come to a conclusion of four by an unfair process of three to one.

When I had a chance to see Mrs. Thornton alone, she advised me to let everything go along just as it was, to wait, and to watch. She really believed that Mrs. Kapua was very fond of Frank; surely I had noticed the growing friendship between them; and now, when it was apparent that she meant no mischief, but quite the reverse, an alarming element was completely eliminated. Wasn't I relieved? Couldn't I see the advantage? Didn't I feel thankful?

I was. I could. And I did. But, not heartily.

I had forgotten that Mrs. Thornton was going to have a wooden wedding so soon, but she told me

she was going to have a dinner on the twenty-fifth, to celebrate five years of married life, or if not a dinner, what would I suggest?

And I knew that Mrs. Thornton's interest would not come back to me and my troubles again on this occasion. So we talked over the list of entertainments possible, and discussed which would be the most successful, considering it would not be moonlight. There was no hurry about deciding, so we did not come to a final settlement of the question.

I had made up my mind to give Mrs. Thornton a calabash on her anniversary, and I was glad I had been reminded of the date in time. She was going to make a collection, and although I did not see how she could be so crazy over them, I was glad to help the collection along. Of course I appreciated the beautiful polish and grain of the native woods from which they were carved, and we all like to have the huge bowls to hold our growing plants. There couldn't be any flower-pots to equal them, but there can be too much of a good thing.

I never did think they were much of an addition to Mrs. Kapua's house. She has rare, old ones, much mended, and patched, of all sizes, and some of real historical value. It would have been natural to go to her to find out where I could best secure a genuine hand-made one, authentic and ancient, but somehow I was tired of calling on Mrs. Kapau, and I made up my mind I would go elsewhere for my information.

The Mitchells are enthusiastic over everything Hawaiian. Their library has a corner devoted to books on the Islands, and their feather *leis*, *tapas*, and curios of all sorts, are both numerous and rare. So I decided to consult Mrs. Mitchell, before starting on my search.

I found the Commodore and Mrs. Chandler in the drawing-room with her. It was Mrs. Mitchell's day at home. I came at once to the object of my visit before anyone else could arrive to interrupt, and Mrs. Mitchell told me of a native, named Kapena, who had some real Lunalilo calabashes for sale.

We had all become accustomed to vague directions as a substitute for numbers and streets, so I was not surprised, nor dismayed, to learn how to reach Kapena. I was to start up a certain lane, turn first to the left, then turn twice more, always to the left, and go along until I came to a monkey pod tree; upon convincing myself that it was beyond doubt a monkey pod,—because it was possible that it marked the fourth turning, but she was almost sure it was the third,—I was to pursue my way to the right and go to the second hut from the first turning after that.

The Commodore said it was almost as bad as sending the helpless stranger to the first shower, instead of the first street, to find a resident of one of our rainy valleys.

I laughed, for I had given him this traditional guidance myself.

“Are you going in for *poi*?” he asked me, as Mrs. Chandler went with Mrs. Mitchell to the other end of the room to see the curios.

Mr. Mitchell had shown them to the Commodore, and I had seen them many times, so we did not follow.

“It takes a pretty hand and wrist to excuse *poi*; but yours would be excuse enough.”

“Oh, it’s an acquired taste of course,” I answered, a bit absent-mindedly.

“Easily acquired,” said the Commodore significantly.

I smiled as I caught his glance. “You know I meant the *poi*,” I said. “The calabash is a secret, but if you promise you won’t tell, I’ll confide in you.”

The Commodore leaned towards me, a look of keen interest in his handsome eyes. There was always a challenge in the Commodore’s bold gaze. I couldn’t help contrasting his eyes with Dr. Stirling Dwinelle’s, although I had not seen the Doctor for a long time; but then, I’d never met his eyes at all.

“I promise I won’t tell.”

“I’m going to give it to Mrs. Thornton for a present.”

The Commodore sat back. “I’m surprised at you,” he said. “That’s not a well-chosen present

from a tactful lady to a lady who lost a priceless pin, while enjoying a private calabash view. The two will always be associated in her mind, you may be sure."

"But," I protested, "she is starting a collection."

"Well, don't look so distressed; I was only joking, you know. This whole business is only a joke anyway,—a sorry joke perhaps, until the pin is found, which of course it is bound to be." The Commodore spoke confidently.

"Oh, do you think so? How I wish that I could be sure!" I cried involuntarily, and with more feeling in my voice than I cared to have apparent.

I tried to laugh and to turn it off, but the Commodore once more leaned towards me.

"Look here, little girl," he said kindly, "don't you worry; don't you get rattled over this affair, like the other women; don't you let malicious, silly gossip influence you." There was sympathy in his voice. "The trouble is that this place is so small that one hears all the gossip going. But Honolulu's greatest trouble is the ubiquitous stranger who thinks he knows it all. Travellers should be attached to strings and be subject to an occasional pull up. If they are in a place a whole day, they generally write a book on it, but if they stay longer, they try to run the inhabitants, which is perhaps worse. Take a woman like Mrs. Spotfield, for in-

stance. I understand that the Stowes are a bit exclusive and do not call on every newcomer, but I overheard Mrs. Spotfield say: 'Who *are* the Stowes? I haven't met them; I don't believe they go in our set.' "

The Commodore's imitation of Mrs. Spotfield, given with a man's tolerance and sense of humor, but with no touch of spitefulness, was indeed amusing.

"As for your great diamond robbery,"—continued the Commodore, "Well, call it that, just for spice,"—he added quickly, before I could expostulate, "listening to her prattle for ten minutes or so yesterday, I gathered that Frank Alden, poor but hitherto worthy, had yielded to temptation, stolen the pin, and was now reported to be secretly negotiating for a house and lot at Waikiki, instead of a boarding-house bedroom, which had once been good enough for him—oh, this was by implication merely; don't let it disturb you, for an instant; no one could put a finger on any actual accusation. But, I tell you, I have strong ideas about the debt a visitor owes to the country he may be burdening by his presence. Here, where the stranger is taken in with open arms and no questions asked, that debt becomes the more sacred. He ought to be forced to take out, along with his automobile license, a conversation limitation (including the written, as well as the spoken). You'll never get Mrs. Chandler to express an opinion, no

matter which resident may be accused of a crime in whatever country—that is, if we are visiting there at the time. Even to me, privately, she would hesitate to speak, knowing my aversion of any such return for hospitality. Publishing one's love letters is only the next step."

The Commodore, with his earnest, straightforward manner, was more attractive than I had ever seen him; in fact, I had never seen him so in earnest before.

"I was in a queer position once," he resumed. "I had a party on the yacht for a fortnight's run. The fifth day out, I missed a box of unset fire opals of great value, that I had been showing to my friends the previous night; they had been given to me by a Rajah, while we were in India. I had strong suspicions as to the guilty party. It was in the Mediterranean. The *Gelda* had been lying off Tunis. I had accepted the hospitality of these people for weeks past, and now they were accepting mine,—in all good faith." The Commodore paused. "Well, I may have been quixotic," he added quietly, "but I never saw those opals again. Of course I've only given you an outline of the story."

After a few moments, during which the Commodore had modestly laughed off what I had tried to say, he added with simple sincerity: "Don't be afraid that either Mrs. Chandler, or I, will ever encourage a hint of slander. As far as we are

concerned, we know nothing and we think nothing; it is only the business of those who really belong. We are outsiders."

He stood up, as Mr. and Mrs. Lumsing came in, Mrs. Lumsing in white, with touches of the brilliant green and gold, usual to the Mandarin jacket and, as a further concession, a long string of beads of Chinese design, and Mr. Lumsing in a suit that was unmistakably the latest, and most correct, English model.

The conversation became general and, in a few moments, I got up to leave. Mrs. Mitchell accompanied me to the steps to give me some parting directions and, as I drove off, I persistently repeated to myself the turns to left and right that would bring me to the monkey pod tree and finally to the hut that held the calabash.

But, it seemed somehow like the well-known method of courting sleep by counting a flock of sheep as they jumped, one by one, over a fence. I was trying to forget my talk with the Commodore; with all his kind intentions, he had not made me feel comfortable—it was too evident that he thought Mrs. Thornton's pin had been stolen.

I alighted from the carriage, and sending it around the corner to wait for me in the shade, I walked slowly along the lane; it was both winding, and branching. After the first turn to the left, I felt it was clear sailing to the monkey pod, as I was to continue always to the left until I reached it,

and I sauntered along, pausing to look up the little paths that led off to the right and making up my mind that some day I would explore each one. It is remarkable how we all keep to the beaten highway and know so little of what is going on in the lanes so near us, that hold a life and a people of their own. In all the years I had lived in Honolulu, I had never before penetrated into the expanse of land that I could see opening out beyond.

The small white cottages I passed were behind irregularly built fences, through which I caught glimpses of the gay little gardens, with their hibiscus hedges flaunting their big crimson flowers in the sunshine. One cottage was so exactly the counterpart of another that they looked as if rolled out of a factory, like tin cans, or any other triumph of modern machinery. And, as if to carry out the design of similitude, each was flanked by long-leaved banana trees; and a single algeroba lent its kindly shade to every tiny front yard.

Warm waves of air, laden with the concentrated sweetness of honeysuckle and jessamine and magnolias, rose and fell and rustled through the banana leaves in languorous, fitful whisperings. The big bumble bees drowsily hummed and buzzed, a contented humming and buzzing, as though they liked the hot sunshine.

It was hot. I turned to the left, for the second time, and as I got around the blind corner, which had completely hidden from view everything behind

it, I nearly ran into a handsome Hawaiian girl. I paused, with an involuntary start.

"*Aloha*," she said, "you no remember Kaala?"

When she spoke and smiled, I did remember her. Kaala was a feminine Jack-of-all-trades. She had made the most delicious guava jam, with which Mrs. Thornton had stocked her store-room, besides sending boxes of it to her friends in San Francisco. Soon, Kaala's jams got to be widely known and justly popular, but when I went to give an order for some, Kaala no longer made jam; she was giving *lomi lomi* and, through Mrs. Kapua's recommendations, she had so many busy hours that she had no time for anything else. No one could *lomi lomi* like Kaala, with her soft, supple hands and soothing touch. She nearly drove our skilful Swedish *masseuse* out of town in desperation. But, as she was about to leave, her patients all began to return to her. For Kaala, with no leisure hours for pleasure, had tired of the regularity of her work and had started a store down town, where, with a yellow *ilima lei* on her black hair, she sold Hawaiian souvenirs, as they had never before been sold, and smiled, the same lazy smile of dimples and white teeth, each time she was told by the tourist that she herself was the only souvenir he was anxious to carry away.

And now, in her snowy *holoku* setting off her dark coloring, with *maile leis* around her neck and head, Kaala was a picture as she stood, lightly swinging her train in one hand, her fine figure and

beautiful carriage showing to advantage in her well-cut gown with its skilful scantiness of folds. Kaala knew enough not to discard her native dress for the popular shirtwaist-and-skirt attire.

When I remarked that I had not seen her for a long time, Kaala informed me that she was no longer in the store. She was now selling buttermilk instead. And she explained to me the growing demand for the drink, and its efficacy as a germ killer, in a manner that might not have delighted a mind all for science, but could not fail to reach the heart and sell the buttermilk. For certainly an elucidation in Kaala's soft tongue of vowels would be sure to convince.

With a gesture towards the nearest cottage, Kaala pointed out where she lived and invited me to come in and have a drink of her buttermilk. I longed for something cool and I was glad to accept.

The vine-covered porch was shady and restful, and the milk, cold and delicious, was a tonic after my hot walk. Kaala nodded her head with gratification at my evident enjoyment. Every one liked it, she assured me, and the rich Commodore of the *Gelda* often rested as I was doing, on her little porch, before he continued his walk and he always said that nowhere in the world could be found refreshment like Kaala's.

I couldn't help being surprised, although it is almost proverbial that the tourist discovers features of a country unknown to the resident thereof. It

was none the less strange for the Commodore, whom I had rarely seen walking, to penetrate into this hot, inland lane, cut off from mountain and sea breeze, as it was, with its inconspicuous entrance from a somewhat unfrequented street.

I wondered how the Commodore had first discovered Kaala. But she told me, rather vaguely, that he often passed her door. And suddenly, as if I had come up against a stone wall, she told no more.

It is that way with the Hawaiian woman; with all her child-like simplicity, her good nature, her easy friendliness, she gives her foreign sisters only a certain amount of her confidence. While seemingly so guileless, she withholds any real freedom of expression.

So, I asked nothing further. But, the Commodore was certainly an enterprising man.

“And Frank Alden eh,” continued Kaala; “sometimes very often he stop. He know Kaala; *ae-e-e*—. Suppose everybody like buttermilk, by’n’by Kaala go get cow eh.”

I had thought in my unsophisticated moments that we all kept on the beaten highways of life, unmindful of the side paths whereon it might be possible to stray. But now, I was even able to perceive that the buttermilk sold by Kaala perhaps had its origin in a tablet of science, undreamt of by simple cow.

“Frank Alden he no steal those diamonds belong Mrs. Thornton,” said Kaala calmly. “He

good man ; by'n'by Mrs. Kapua find, and everybody tell everybody : ' I no say before Frank Alden take.' Ah-h-h-h—— ; no good."

" Hush, Kaala, don't talk like that!" I broke in when I could speak. " It is not possible that everybody is saying that Frank Alden stole Mrs. Thornton's diamonds ! "

" Only some people say," said Kaala with a quiet dignity that was a reproach to my impetuosity.

" It will be bad for them, if he hears it," I said.

" *Ae-e-e*——" said Kaala, " they no too much talk ; ah-h-h—only whisper eh."

I stood up to leave and, with a slight explanation of the quest that had brought me up her way, I started off again, after an exchange of *alohas*, and proceeded in search of Kapena and his calabashes.

The lost diamonds, then, were a matter of discussion throughout the length and breadth of Honolulu, as I had thought. But, what did I care? It was a nine days' wonder, as Mrs. Thornton had declared.

How little we really know of the men we seem to know so well ; I had never supposed that Frank cared for buttermilk. And he had never mentioned Kaala.

I wondered if the Commodore had happened to tell of this quiet, little lane, and of her? Of course I could understand the Commodore. But, I had thought the Commodore and Frank of such different types. Perhaps it is unreasonable to expect a type to stay set, when a pretty girl is in question.

I turned to the left; this was the third,—and there was the monkey pod tree. The cottages were beginning to thin out. There were only three, or four now, at irregular distances apart, until the road turned again.

A filmy little shower fell from the cloudless sky; the sun shone through the haze with a golden glory as though its beams were melted into shimmering mist. Over the valley in the distance, a rainbow curved, deepening as the sun touched it, into a radiance of violets, greens and yellows, a perfect arch starting from behind the irregular mountain outline, and lost amongst the shadows below.

I hesitated under the monkey pod tree. But, there was no doubt it was a monkey pod; Mrs. Mitchell had been right about its marking the third turning. The path to the right was clearly defined. It brought me around the tree. The filmy shower, Hawaii's "liquid sunshine," the rainbow over the valley, were left behind me, as I faced the sea. The road became broader, the fences abruptly ceased, the neat little gardens were replaced by wild cactus, growing amidst the algerobas, and the air was pungent with the lantana, rioting everywhere in masses of pinkish bloom.

Two more turns and I would reach Kapena's hut. But the first one brought me into a broad, open space of land. Algeroba trees in a solid banking marked its boundary. At the farther end stood a cottage, almost buried in the foliage and trees, about it. It was unlike the other cottages, perhaps

because it was painted a dark red, showing an individuality of taste which distinguished it from its neighbors.

Something was wrong about the monkey pod tree, that was clear. This was the end of the lane. I looked about me; there was a sort of shed near-by, with a vegetable garden behind it; possibly some one was working there who could tell me about Kapena.

Beyond the shed I found a Japanese boy who was squatting on the ground, busily weeding. He was some distance off. I picked my way through the soft, brown earth, and when near enough to be heard, I asked him if he knew Kapena.

He replied: "No got."

"Who belong that house *makai?* " I asked, pointing towards the dark red house.

"Belong Mis'ee Kapua," he said.

Mrs. Kapua owned land everywhere, so this information was not surprising.

"Somebody stop?" I persisted hopefully. Although Kapena could not live there, it might perhaps be occupied and I could get some sort of directions at least.

"Yes. Now no stop. Before yesterday, he stop."

There was nothing for me to do but to retrace my steps to the monkey pod, and there study the lay of the land.

Carefully choosing the harder ground, where my

shoes wouldn't sink in, I reached the little shed again, and stepped out into the footpath at the side. Quickly I drew back out of sight.

A man and woman were walking along together, towards the dark red house. They had not seen me, but my momentary glance was enough. It was Frank and Mrs. Kapua. Frank was talking earnestly, and Mrs. Kapua was nodding her head in acquiescence.

I stood behind the shed and watched them until they were lost in the thick foliage about the house. And then I retraced my steps to the monkey pod tree and on, past Kaala's cottage, making the turns almost mechanically, as I reached them. And, at last, coming to the end of the lane, I emerged into the street. Around the corner, I found the carriage waiting in the shade; I got in and drove home.

It was not long before Mrs. Mitchell telephoned to ask me if I had found a calabash to suit me, and when she heard that I had found the monkey pod, but not Kapena, she said:

“Oh, dear, I should have said the poinciana tree; I remember now the monkey pod was for *Niihau* mats.”

XIX.

I HAD SO often heard of the monosyllabic murmurs of lovers, the long silences familiar to a perfect understanding, the abrupt pauses when hearts were too full for utterance, but although these symptoms had become peculiar to Frank and me, a proper diagnosis of our case would never have traced the cause to the ecstasy of love.

Frank had ceased to mention his *tête-à-têtes* with Mrs. Kapua. Of course his meetings with Kaala, he had never even referred to at all; it was possible to regard them as a side issue.

There was a change in Frank; he had now the look of a man with a keen interest in life; in the past, I had often longed to cheer him up, but he never seemed discouraged any more.

I could scarcely realize that only on the previous day I had gone to hunt for calabashes, as I walked along beside him and reviewed the situation dispassionately. I had done a great deal of thinking since yesterday.

“Lovely night,” said Frank.

He had said this before.

“It is,” I replied once more.

“Warm day yesterday—did you notice it?”

I had noticed it.

“And only eighty, after all,” said Frank, with the usual and pardonable pride we all share, in

regard to the even temperature of our country.
"And still it seemed so hot."

I refrained from any allusion to his hot walk up a sun-baked lane, and although I wanted to say that a drink of buttermilk might have cooled him off, I dismissed this as too childish and remarked instead that buttermilk was considered a refreshing summer drink; this at least sounded impersonal.

Frank declared that buttermilk was a fad of the moment.

Perhaps it was. I did not pursue the subject.

As we arrived at Mrs. Thornton's house, she came forward to greet us and explained that when the through steamer got in, with the Horatio Metcalfs on board, she had planned an impromptu party for them. The time was too short to attempt a dinner, as they were going on to Japan at midnight, so she had telephoned for ice-cream, the loan of a couple of home-made cakes, some singing boys, a few of her friends, and the party was on.

We found the *lanai* already quite full, although Frank and I had done no lingering on either the pathway of love, or the stretch of road that divided us from Mrs. Thornton's. We were introduced to Mr. Metcalf, a prosperous-looking, middle-aged man, and I left Frank talking to him, while I went inside with Mrs. Thornton to meet his wife.

I passed Mrs. Spotfield in the doorway, and she

greeted me cordially with voice and smile, but her eyes sought the corner where I had just seen Billy Barker.

Mrs. Chandler was standing by the bed, taking off her lacy wrap, as we entered.

“Goodness me, I didn’t know you would all be in full dress!” Mrs. Metcalf exclaimed. “And here I am in a high-neck gown; I thought you said to come informally.”

Mrs. Thornton introduced us and assured Mrs. Metcalf, in the same breath, that we were apt to be in low-neck gowns every evening in Honolulu, as it was so warm.

Mrs. Metcalf laughed good-naturedly, and said she didn’t really care. She was a jolly woman from somewhere in the west, with a breezy, unaffected manner. She told us that she had a little lightning change act of her own, and unpinning a bunch of rather staid puffs from the back of her hair, she pulled them out into coquettish curls, and put them on towards the front, while, with a few deft touches, she gave herself quite a rakish effect. She said that she always did this when she wanted to dress up, and it really was remarkable to see the difference it made in her appearance.

Mrs. Chandler was gazing at her with eyes full of interest, and as we followed her and Mrs. Thornton into the *lanai*, she said to me:

“What a touch to introduce! Can’t you just see it on the stage—well done, you know?”

I could see it, Mrs. Chandler's enthusiasm was so inspiring.

Guy Selby joined me as soon as we got outside, and he said he had saved a seat for me, where I would love to be, out of the glare of the electric lights.

How easy it is to guide others if we are leading them to our own goal!

There was no glare anywhere on Mrs. Thornton's *lanai*, and this was certainly what might be called the gloaming, but in the circumstances, I was perfectly willing to be there with Guy; I did not even enquire if he had put out the electric light bulb, hanging so near us in its Japanese screen, or whether our hostess, with her unerring instinct, had arranged a few dimly-lit corners.

We were with the party and still apart, in our little palm-screened nook, and we sat there comfortably, fanned by the feathery breezes as they floated through the still garden, stirring it momentarily to a gentle rustling, and sighing, that mingled with the murmur of the surf.

The moon, not yet risen behind Diamond Head, sent her pale rays of light before her, a dim forerunner of a later glory, and the familiar garden was a new and undiscovered land, full of weird suggestions, of mysterious shadows and obscure distances, the palms standing tall and straight, like ghostly sentinels silhouetted against the starry sky, the bushes and trees defined in strange outlines,

fading farther on into a background of impenetrable density.

And, as if this density were dissolving, all at once it seemed to move, and change, and mould itself into detached, phantom-like forms, and gradually we could distinguish, creeping through the garden towards us, five dark, stealthy figures.

As they came nearer, the lights from the house struck the polished wood of violins, *ukuleles*, and guitars, but seeking the shadows, the five musicians advanced noiselessly, and grouped themselves at the foot of the steps.

At a signal from the leader, with a startling suddenness, they swept their instruments with their fingers, and simultaneously they broke into a rollicking *hula*, a song with an irresistible whoop, and a dash, and abandon, their mellow voices blending into a perfect harmony of sound.

Used as I was to this abrupt mode of introducing a garden concert, I would have jumped, just the same, had I not watched the advance and been prepared for the onslaught, but every one else was taken by surprise and the boys showed their white teeth in broad smiles of satisfaction.

There was no mistaking the genuine delight of the Horatio Metcalfs and, as the plaintive *meles* and inspiriting *hulas* alternated, filling the air with melody, as the moon rose and converted the garden into a fairy-like delicacy of beauty, and as the lights, and perfumes, and breezes, and music, melted

into one delicious impression of luxurious softness, it did seem as if blessed indeed was the hostess of Hawaii.

Ours was not the only palm-screened nook. Mrs. Spotfield had discovered another, just deserted by Mrs. Kapua and the Commodore, and she was leading Billy Barker to it, when Adrienne Singlee sprang from her seat and said solicitously:

“ Sit here, do; you’ll like this comf’y old arm-chair; we’ll take those straight, hard chairs.”

She and Cherub took, or rather snatched them, without even waiting to be thanked. Perhaps it was as well. Guy joined in my laugh; it certainly was funny to an onlooker. But, it took courage for a *coup* like that. Of course Adrienne and Cherub had the palm-screened nook for their reward.

And it was not more than ten minutes when Mrs. Chandler, who had been talking to Mr. Metcalf, had Billy Barker with her instead. I really don’t know how she did it, but she had somehow exchanged men, and Mr. Metcalf was trying to get on with Mrs. Spotfield, whose smile had vanished entirely. I made up my mind that I would not get into Mrs. Spotfield’s bad books that evening.

It was only a little later that Frank took Mrs. Kapua for a walk in the garden. Mrs. Kapua was really getting accustomed to the habit of changing partners and the look she gave Frank, as they went down the steps and she slipped her arm through his, showed an adaptability at least.

As far as I was concerned, I really didn't care as they disappeared into the shadows arm in arm. I had come to the conclusion that Frank and I would be the sort of couple that would get along reasonably well, because each would pursue a separate way. Or else, we might not become a couple at all. And it is wonderful how the mind adjusts itself to new conditions. I could even see myself adjusted.

The Metcalfs started for their ship at about eleven. Mrs. Thornton had a big basket full of *leis*, which she divided amongst us, and we fairly covered Mrs. Metcalf with flowers, until she looked like a popular *kamaaina*, instead of a stranger in town for just a few hours. Mr. Metcalf was shy about being decked out so festively, but he submitted to a wreath around his hat, and at last they went off, declaring they would never be happy until they could come back to Honolulu, for they knew now, and would never forget, what was meant by the *Aloha* of the Islands.

Their departure was a signal for most of the others to leave, but a few of us, hospitably pressed by Mr. and Mrs. Thornton to stay, at least as long as the music did, lingered behind and, as the last carriage drove off, we went indoors for some punch.

"You needn't be afraid of it; it's harmless," said Mrs. Thornton. "Not like your awful ship punch!" she added, turning laughingly to Guy Selby and Cherub Billkins.

“We don’t want any harmless punch!” cried those two incorrigible youths, in a spontaneous chorus.

“Take heart,” said Billy Barker, “take heart! It’s the versatile punch bowl we have here, in Hawaii, and it is the Jekyll and Hyde drink that comes out of it. We call it conveniently: ‘Summer’s Delight,’ or the ‘Salome Wriggle.’ The first is drunk by Prohibition.”

“Heavens!” cried Mrs. Thornton. “What a libel!”

“I should call it a give-away,” amended Mrs. Chandler, shaking her finger at Billy.

“I’ve always been misunderstood,” said Billy.

“Well, here’s to a perfect understanding!” said the Commodore, his glance meeting Mrs. Kapua’s.

I looked carelessly about. I did not intend to know if Guy was trying to catch my eye, and I did not want to know if Frank wasn’t.

Mrs. Spotfield, at Billy’s left hand, was drinking to him, with a murmured remark, and Mrs. Chandler, on the right, was touching her glass to his with a gay clinking; and Billy was manfully responding with his usual impartiality, although I was beginning to think that Mrs. Chandler had gone ahead in the scoring.

Adrienne and Cherub were lost to the world, as they sat together, a couple of happy children.

Mrs. Thornton slipped her hand, with its glass full of punch, around her husband's, and they drank with interlocked arms.

"And who is going to give a bathing party before this moon is on the wane?" asked Billy Barker.

No one volunteered.

"It is on the wane," I said.

"My, what pessimism!" Billy looked at me with mild surprise. "Well, I suppose it's up to me to wake the night."

"Honolulu doesn't have to be awakened," said Mrs. Spotfield, smiling at him as if he were responsible.

"Thank you," said Billy.

"I don't see what you have to complain of," continued Mrs. Spotfield, warming to her theme, "there's always something going on, and now,—now we have even a diamond theft to stir us up."

"A burglar," interposed Mrs. Kapua quickly. "A burglar doesn't suit our climate, so I beg of you not to get on that subject."

"Do you know," said Mrs. Spotfield, "while I was in Washington last winter, there was a luncheon given, at which a platinum purse set with diamonds was missing. The hostess forthwith ordered a duplicate of the purse to be made and presented it to her unfortunate guest, assuring her that it was the least she could do to make amends. Now, what do you think of that?"

"Goodness gracious eh, is that expected of me!" cried Mrs. Kapua.

Everybody laughed and the Commodore said the Washington hostess was probably trying to shield some one.

"Search politics," added the Commodore. "Very likely she had a favor to ask from the husband of the guest she suspected. These hushed-up affairs are always due to diplomacy—or charity."

"Oh! Isn't all this mystery exciting!" said Mrs. Chandler. "I love it. Fancy what a turn,—well worked up, you know,—three good parts. A young and beautiful woman, two society men——"

"Both handsome," cried Mrs. Thornton.

"Spread the beauty," suggested Billy Barker.

"In her hair," continued Mrs. Chandler, ignoring the interruption, "in her hair shines a diamond ornament of wondrous lustre. The curtain goes up on an empty stage; the Star, in a ball gown, enters with a light laugh, followed by two men in dress suits. As she comes in,—like this——"

Almost unconsciously, Mrs. Chandler got up and arranged three, or four chairs at the other end of the room with a couple of big, branching palms for a background, pulled out a sofa, rolled a table near it, put her fan, a small pot of ferns, and a couple of books on top and, with a touch here and there, she had arranged a stage setting. Getting behind one of the palms for an instant, she came forward with an indescribable poise and grace, somehow

conveying the impression that she was not alone. Beyond question, she must have often acted in private theatricals, her ease was so marked.

“Enter the Star. Right. The diamonds are in her hair. Here stands Mr. Jones——”

“I choose to be Jones; he looks good to me,” said the Commodore, as Mrs. Chandler placed a chair to represent Jones.

“And here, beside me, is Mr. Brown. I am flirtatious, frivolous,—no expostulations from the audience please, Mrs. Thornton—I am thinking only of my fascinations and rejoicing in my power in having taken two such desirable men away from all the other women who have been trying to get them.”

“So perfect for your type,” murmured Mrs. Spotfield.

“Both my escorts are well known. Club men, popular in society, young, handsome, and all that, you know.”

“I protest,” muttered Billy Barker, rising and holding up a hand, “they’re not the whole show.”

“Don’t interrupt such a perfect description of the escorts with a jealous outburst,” said Guy Selby, springing to his feet.

Cherub Billkins raised his hand. “Please,” he said. “Please! The villain has not lit a cigarette yet!”

“Sit down and be good,” said Mrs. Chandler.

Both gentlemen resumed their seats.

“After a few words, in which it becomes apparent by my attitude that I prefer one man to the other,—say Mr. Brown, here, is my favorite——”

“Fickle one!” cried the Commodore.

“He being Jones the while,” explained Billy Barker, who certainly would have made a first-class spieler.

Mrs. Chandler had taken her place where Mr. Brown was supposed to stand and in a gruff voice, she said:

“Well, I must be off; I have a lot of work tomorrow, by Jove, and I must be up early in the morning.”

The audience laughed aloud as Mrs. Chandler, with a manly stride, crossed the stage.

“Mr. Jones is now speaking: ‘Oh, forget it, Brown!’”

The audience gave way once more to unrestrained mirth. But Mrs. Chandler, unheeding, returned to her first place and again sweetly feminine, said prettily and very girlishly:

“Oh, please forget it, Mr. Brown.”

“Wait a moment,” said the Commodore. “Let me suggest here. Smooth things out a bit; have it understood that the two men are wealthy, favorites of fortune, money no object—don’t give your plot away at the start——”

There was a pause. It was a thoughtless interpolation. If the representation had started to

be literal, why not leave it so? Why make both men out rich; it brought to a focus the well-known fact that one was not. Any amount of suggestion had been opened out in an instant. It was worthy of Mrs. Spotfield; it would be like her with her lack of tact, but it wasn't like the Commodore.

No one seemed uncomfortable. Still, the pause was almost awkward.

"Too much monotony," said Frank quietly. "Call one of the men poor. Poor—but honest. That points the moral, Mrs. Chandler."

"But money comes in so handy, my boy; it adorns the tale, you know," said the Commodore.

"It is handy," Frank said briefly. "As you say, Commodore, it covers a multitude of sins."

The Commodore hadn't said it. Frank was looking straight at him, as he spoke. And the Commodore returned the look in full measure. He had never really taken to Frank, any more than Frank had to him. There had been a mutual antagonism from the start, although the Commodore had made every effort to hide it. That antagonism was now perhaps fostered, by an open rivalry, into unmistakable dislike.

I recalled, and I wondered whether Frank did too, the expression on the Commodore's face when he shot into the cocoanut tree. An implacable enemy—a rich and powerful man. Had he thrown suspicion on Frank intentionally? Or, harboring

the suspicion, had he betrayed it thoughtlessly? Not likely. Could it be possible that he actually believed Frank had stolen the pin?

“Do go on, Mrs. Chandler,” said Frank. “Mr. Brown was just going to work, you know.”

“Well, me for Sunny Hawaii,” said Billy Barker lazily,

“The fish they fill the ocean,
The taro’s on the shore,
So who—would make—a motion,
When work—is—such—a—bore?”

Although rather halting in its delivery, this must have seemed an almost inspired bit of impromptu work to Billy, judging by his pleased expression. He sat back with a satisfied sigh.

“Is that a hint for me to ring down the curtain?” asked Mrs. Chandler, with a laugh. She sank into a chair by Billy, and said: “Fan me.”

Mrs. Spotfield looked a volume of satire; she could do no more, as Billy turned from her and with the same fan he had been using chivalrously in her behalf, and which no doubt belonged to her, he leaned over Mrs. Chandler to do her bidding.

“You should have been a diplomat!” I overheard the Commodore say in an undertone to Billy Barker.

And I hated him at that moment. He had deliberately turned Billy’s good-hearted interruption

into a charitable endeavor to help Frank out of an awkward position.

Mrs. Chandler was gayly unconscious, and laughingly accepted the compliments showered upon her for her unexpected histrionic ability. There was nothing malicious about her. Mrs. Spotfield would be likely to stir up a hornets' nest purposely, but in Mrs. Chandler's composition there was nothing of that; she had forgotten everything but the interest of her clever little sketch, and the fun she had got out of it.

"It's time for the second act," said Mrs. Spotfield, not altogether playfully, as she watched the wielding of her own fan in another's cause.

But the Commodore quickly, and pointedly, interposed. It was not what he said; it was in his manner and expression that he showed a disapproval out of all proportion.

Mrs. Kapua rose and walked slowly across the room to one of the big palms that contributed to the stage setting, slowly and with the grace peculiarly her own, which could come only from an ancestry that had never known the restraint of modern dress.

"I will give the second act eh," she said.

And amidst the applause of a delighted audience, she called out something to the boys in the garden. She spoke in Hawaiian, a musical flow of vowel notes. The boys, in response, struck up a lively ragtime tune.

Mrs. Kapua stood perfectly still for a moment. Then, walking to the end of the room with an indescribable lightness and swinging ease of motion, holding the train of her soft, white gown in one hand, she stood before an imaginary mirror, turning her head from side to side and adjusting the red hibiscus that she had taken from a vase and stuck in the front of her hair. One almost forgot the hibiscus and saw only the imaginary diamonds instead and caught their sparkle, and flash, as she intended, while her beautiful smile expressed the pleasure she felt in their brilliancy.

She left the mirror, at last, and as she did so, she made an almost imperceptible sign to the boys outside. Abruptly they changed to one of their own plaintive melodies with its minor chords of melting sadness, every note a tear. Mrs. Kapua, coming forward, until evidently reaching the two men described by Mrs. Chandler, stood between them and showed plainly by gesture and expression that she was bidding them both good night.

“Mr. Jones and Mr. Brown have decided to go together eh,” she said, in an explanation that really was not needed.

It was all apparent, and the exit of the two men as she followed them to the palm, the sudden going out of the lights before they left, and the equally sudden relighting, were vividly portrayed. She had turned her back, for a moment, and the hibiscus was gone. By her pantomime, she had conveyed

a whole scene and brought her audience to a point of breathless interest.

It was as natural for Mrs. Kapua to act by gestures, as it was for Mrs. Chandler to speak. I have seen a couple of Hawaiian women discuss a question, revolve it, and come to a conclusion, without a single word being uttered. Supple hands, flexible wrists and arms, expressive eyes, a mouth that speaks in glimpses of white teeth, and in dimples and curves, this and more too is possible to the daughters of Hawaii.

“Bravo, bravo!” cried Mrs. Chandler, with an enthusiasm so spontaneous, and an appreciation so real, that it was irresistibly infectious.

Mrs. Kapua held up her hand to silence us and we became quiet. One could have heard a pin drop. She stood in an attitude of listening, half turning to the window, as though from there came the sound that had disturbed her. But all was still again and with a sigh, her whole body relaxing as she moved away and sank into a chair, she let her thoughts run riot in a dream where some scene of gayety and pleasure was being enacted.

Gradually one could see a disturbing influence once more gain ascendancy. Again there was a sound in the direction of the window; it became more distinct. And now, there was no question about it. Rising slowly, afraid to move, and yet impelled, her lithe body stiff, frozen with terror,

by degrees she summoned up her courage and forced her gaze to the window. Nothing was there, but approaching slowly, inch by inch, there was a stealthy, creeping something.

Cold shivers ran up and down my back; the stillness in the room was unbroken except by the wail of the violin, a weird undertone of accompaniment. Her frightened eyes always on the window, Mrs. Kapua, retreating slowly, got behind one of the palms and from her position of concealment, looked out fearfully on the imaginary scene before her, expressing in her face the emotions of watching some one climb in, a furtive, gliding creature, drawing nearer and nearer until within a few feet of her hiding place, her shock as she felt in vain for the diamonds in her hair to tear them out, to fling them, to stop at any cost the advance,—but, at last, the pause, the finding of some object, the return, the window again,—and out, and down, and away—beyond her sight.

No one spoke until Billy Barker, with a long-drawn breath, half a whistle, said:

“ Phew—Mrs. Kapua, that *is* going some!”

She came forward with her musical laugh. “That was the Porto Rican thief who has so far eluded the police. Waikiki has been his special haunt, as you know. He did not dream when he came to my house that I boast of my *kahuna* inheritance. A *kahuna* is a good detective. When the

Porto Rican is captured eh, there will be no more mystery."

"A simple enough solution," said the Commodore.

Frank was near me. "Too simple," he murmured significantly, so low that no one could overhear.

But I did not ask him what he meant. Why had Mrs. Kapua given an interpretation so new, so unexpected, so almost inspired in its originality and cleverness of conception? Whether accepted or not, it had diverted discussion into a new channel. Was she trying to save Frank from the suspicion so clearly pointing to him? Did she think him guilty? Or, was her motive the mere deflection of the gossip that threatened to engulf him? In any case, she had interposed in his behalf. Her whole attitude was a generous one. It had come in her way to mediate at a moment when she felt he needed a champion. She had thought quickly; her action had been prompt and decisive. I could be fair; I could see that she had done more than I. Little as she may have accomplished, admitting it was only a momentary diversion, she had not wavered. She had not waited, and wondered, and weighed, and consulted.

While I, with the power to interpose what I thought would be a lasting good, had sat by passively. Influenced by what? Her growing intimacy with Frank, the visit to her own remote cottage with

my lover, his inconstancy—if it had come to that. I had not been able to forget myself, my pride, my doubts. I thought of Kaala, on the way to that cottage, and of the gossip about Frank, even in that little lane. I looked at the Commodore, and I felt again a cold clutch at my heart. We had not yet got to the end. Could I put myself aside and remember only Frank's need?

And when he was safe, when this wretched affair had quite died out—I would go to Europe—by myself——

But now—I could help him now. And now was the time.

“Frank!” I said with a half sob.

A man hates to jump, he hates to be startled out of a manly calm. And he does not outgrow his scorn for the nervous outburst of an impressionable school-girl. But, before he could recover from the shock of my explosive, hysterical voicing of his name, I had rushed in and told him that I had confided our engagement to Mrs. Thornton, and I was going to ask her to announce it, announce it now, on this auspicious occasion. I think I said something like that.

If Frank had said no, I would have gone ahead then, just the same; if he had proposed to break it all off, I could scarcely have been deterred.

We were standing apart from the others. Mrs. Kapua was the centre of attraction. She was explaining her *kahuna* power and no one seemed to

doubt she had found the thief. Adrienne had suggested ringing up the police without delay. Mrs. Thornton had gone outside to speak to the singing boys. No one was paying the slightest attention to us.

Frank's eyes met mine in a long, a steady gaze.

"Dear one," he said, "it is all right at last. Come, we will go to her together."

XX.

THROUGH the remainder of that evening at Mrs. Thornton's I had been in a dream. Nothing stood out clearly except Mrs. Kapua's congratulations, seemingly from the heart, and the Commodore's that unmistakably were not. Mrs. Thornton, right then and there, had invited the whole party to a breakfast in our honor. For although Sunday was only two days off, every one present could come, while during the week, there was something to prevent, and either one or the other could not be secured. So, after some consideration, the day and hour were decided upon.

Out of the vague, misty recollections of whatever else transpired, was the fact that Guy Selby showed no surprise. I had been so absent-minded throughout the evening, he told me, that when he enquired: "Who's my rival?" I had replied: "Mrs. Kapua." He assured me that, after that, all was easy.

I had refrained from asking Frank why he had been so ready to announce our engagement then, and so unwilling before. Perhaps what had seemed like readiness was only a graceful surrender. Although we had had but little time alone, being drawn into the inevitable whirl that Frank had predicted, still love will find a way; I had rather avoided the way. Kaala, the sunny lane, the dark red cottage—an almost hidden nest—were still secrets of the past.

I had not alluded to Mrs. Kapua; apparently she did not exist for me. Frank vouchsafed no explanations; I don't believe it occurred to him that I was waiting for any. He was satisfied to be with me and his expression was one of perfect content. The intuition, once so distinctly his, had failed him completely. It should have warned him now, if my manner did not, that there was something wrong. However, I had made up my mind to ask for no information, to court no confidences; I had done my part. My trip to Europe—alone—was in abeyance.

I arrived at Mrs. Thornton's in good time for the breakfast, and she drew me aside to tell me that she had expected woodcock by the steamer, due from Japan the day before, and had counted on this delicacy for a course. Her menu was disturbed, as the *Maru* was late, and she had to substitute brains at the last moment, she couldn't even get sweetbreads. She was so disappointed, that I told her I was really mixed as to whether the woodcock, or our engagement, was the incentive for the present function.

“‘Honor to whom honor is due,’” I added with all the significance I could muster.

Mrs. Thornton laughed. “But brains as a substitute *entrée* has been worked overtime,” she said; “and now, what about the woodcock when they do come? Would you give a luncheon, or a dinner for them?”

This was still open to discussion when we returned to the farther end of the *lanai*, where every one had assembled.

Mrs. Kapua was not there, but in a few moments her carriage drove up. She looked so handsome, as she ascended the steps, that there was an involuntary pause in the hum of conversation. We were all staring at her, as she walked with her swaying, easy grace across from the steps towards us.

She was dressed in white with no touch of color except her ruby pendant, richly red as the light struck it and set it aglow, toning in with the soft crimson of her cheeks and lips, vying with the deep lustre of her eyes.

As Mrs. Thornton advanced to meet her, Mrs. Kapua paused and held out both ungloved hands, tightly shut.

“ Which hand will you choose? ” she asked.

Without waiting for an answer, she opened the right one, palm up, and moved it into a ray of sunshine that filtered through the vines; a thousand lights, and glints, and sparkles, and flashes, caught every eye.

“ Here is your sunburst eh,” she said simply. “ I found it this morning. I am so glad that I just had to come and tell you myself. I really could not telephone—I waited to bring you the pin.”

She gave the glittering stones to Mrs. Thornton; henceforth their sparkle could be only glitter to me.

"Oh," murmured Mrs. Thornton. She gazed at her pin with wide eyes of surprise and growing delight. "Oh-h-h—" She turned to Mr. Thornton, "Oh, George," she said, like a happy child.

And that was all. But somehow I felt just like crying. Even Billy Barker looked subdued. It seemed very sweet to have some one to whom to turn with every joy and sorrow, some one in whom you had perfect trust, some one who really cared. Her faith would not be easily shaken; it had been built on a firm foundation.

Mr. Thornton put his arm around his wife, and they stood together while she held the pin aloft, waving it in the air and smiling at the Babel of exclamations and congratulations all about her.

"Where did you find it, Mrs. Kapua?" asked Mr. Thornton, when he had a chance, at last.

"It was caught in the beads of the portière eh."

Mrs. Kapua waited a moment until our astonishment would permit her to speak. When everybody had quieted down a bit, she explained how the pin must have slipped out of Mrs. Thornton's hair as she passed through the slender strands of beads, that swung and swirled at the slightest touch, and how it had been tangled amongst them,—so firmly held in fact, that the pin had to be cut out finally from amongst the strings.

"It must slip out too easily, Mrs. Thornton," the Commodore said. "Couldn't you have a more secure fastening?"

He turned to Mr. Thornton and offered to show him a device to insure the safety of his wife's jewels. Mr. Thornton said he would be glad to borrow the idea and to put it in use as soon as possible.

"Let me see your pin," said Frank to Mrs. Thornton.

His tone was strained; it sounded forced, unnatural. His demand might have been: "Your money or your life!" There was a ring of intensity in it that seemed quite out of proportion to such a simple request. We were all so excited though, that no wonder Frank was not himself.

Mrs. Thornton handed him the diamonds, and Frank examined them as though he had never seen the ornament before. Turning it over, he looked at the back.

"It isn't hurt, is it?" cried Mrs. Thornton.

"Is it not remarkable," the Commodore spoke with slow emphasis. "Is it not remarkable that such a bit of brilliancy should remain undiscovered like this? Right in a *lanai* where we have been—perhaps a dozen times, or more, since its loss!"

It was remarkable of course. And it was surely true that the Commodore had been in that *lanai* a dozen times, or more.

"After all, the explanation is simple," said Mrs. Kapua. "To start with, our search of course was never up in the air; no one thought of the portière—how Yone ever happened to look there, I do not know; and neither does she. The pin has

been in a dark corner where the daylight could never strike it; even if we had caught a gleam from it, we would probably have thought it was the beads of the portière that were shining. At night, you know, the *lanai* is always dimly lit,—on moonlight nights, not at all, and at other times, only with shaded lanterns."

"Well," said the Commodore, with a deep sigh, "*'all's well that ends well.'*"

And his words found an echo in my heart.

We went in to breakfast. Of course the diamonds and their wonderful recovery continued to be the subject of discussion. Every time the conversation changed, for a moment, it quickly came back again to this absorbing topic; we could think of nothing else. Tales of startling losses and marvellous recoveries, of stolen jewels that had never been traced, and all sorts of burglaries, followed one another in rapid succession.

I was glad I could be quiet and did not have to talk. The sudden reappearance of the diamonds had been almost as great a shock, though a more pleasurable one, than their loss and what it had entailed. I could not think it over clearly; I could only sit and try to realize that this great mystery, with its heart throbbing possibilities, was in an instant wiped out, as though it had never been. Only the memory of it, like the bruise after a cruel blow, was left.

The Commodore raised his glass. "Smiling

Hawaii," he said, "smiling seas, smiling skies, smiling people—here's to all happy conclusions." His glance included Frank and me, with Mrs. Thornton. "Mrs. Chandler and I would never have sailed away while you were in *pilikia*; we will find it hard enough to go, at best."

"Go!" cried Mrs. Thornton. "Why, what do you mean?"

Adrienne Singlee, her eyes as round as saucers, and both on Mrs. Kapua, murmured: "Going." Her inflection was downward.

And I knew that if she had been near enough to me, she would have added: "Mrs. Kapua at large!"

Mrs. Spotfield with nicely modulated regret, and a smile adjusted to fit, said: "Oh, don't go; we can't spare you."

But when she turned the smile on Billy Barker, he was gazing at Mrs. Chandler, who was certainly worth looking at in the palest of blue, with the reddish tints of her hair, the gray of her eyes, and the pink of her cheeks suggesting a beautiful flower, more lovely than the crush roses that covered her big picture hat. Around her neck, she wore a *lei* of exquisite pink carnations, long and full, and fringed out in imitation of a fluffy boa.

She raised it and breathing in its spicy fragrance, she laid her cheek caressingly against it and was prettier than ever.

"I told the Commodore I was going to hide

and be left behind," she said. "I don't want to go away."

The Commodore smiled approvingly, Billy Barker delightedly, and Mrs. Spotfield tolerantly. She would have all the innings later.

"We will be back," said the Commodore. "We are going to make Honolulu our headquarters next winter; our hearts will be here always."

"When do you sail?" asked Frank.

The Commodore flung back his look; there was no lovelight lost in their glances, but I didn't care now.

"We are not going to start for a fortnight, or so," replied the Commodore. "We did not expect to go quite so soon, but Dr. Stirling Dwinelle has not been having very good news of his father's health lately; old man Dwinelle—of the New York Dwinelles, you know—has heart trouble. If the news is not better next mail, I told the Doctor we would cut our stay short here, and sail at once. He wanted to go on by steamer and leave us, but of course we would not listen to that. You know we had planned to go soon, any way."

We had all thought the Chandlers were going to remain with us through November, but we were mistaken, for in October they were to be in the Mediterranean to meet a party of friends.

The Commodore and his wife could hardly help being pleased with the regrets showered upon them. Mrs. Thornton declared she could not get along

without them, that she had grown to depend upon them now to help make things go. Cherub Billkins and Guy Selby said the Harbor would be lonely and deserted without the little *Gelda*; every one had something nice to say, even Frank, and if his remarks were addressed to Mrs. Chandler alone, no one noticed that the Commodore was not included; for that matter, Billy Barker did not seem to include the Commodore either.

After breakfast, we sat around the *lanai* where coffee was served, and tried to keep up some sort of conversation, at least; but our own home product and its superiority over any other, appeared to set the boundary and we stayed right with it.

Not all of us, however; Adrienne and Cherub had disappeared around a corner with a new recklessness, and a disregard of Mrs. Spotfield, lately developed in Adrienne. Billy Barker was lost in thought and failed to live up to his reputation of Right-Hand Man to Happy Hostesses. And Mrs. Kapua and the Commodore were plunged into a world-forgetting flirtation.

The rest of us were left to struggle on. A spell was over us, and it was not a restful one either. The day will come when the merry surprise party will be relegated to the dark ages, with the burning of witches, and pleasantries of like nature. No more will civilization tolerate the idea of a band of egotists breaking in on the sanctity of a home to drag out some unfortunate female with her hair uncurled,

or some inwardly cursing male, who might have felt convivial, if warned. Of all barbarous perpetrations, the springing of a surprise on an unsuspecting victim is the worst; we were suffering from the reaction of two.

As I looked at Mrs. Thornton, I felt almost hypnotized by the baleful glitter of the restored gewgaw, so gayly twinkling in her hair. I had never appreciated the word gewgaw,—I had never felt its need before. As for Frank, he was strangely quiet, as though drugged into an oblivion of his surroundings. Neither of us could have been suspected of having lately been transported into realms of bliss. I could only hope our inertia would be ascribed to the composure peculiar to perfect happiness.

I roused myself with an effort. “Don’t you sing, Mrs. Chandler?” I asked. “I’m sure you do; won’t you sing for us?”

I had suggested this in desperation, but to my surprise Mrs. Chandler acknowledged that she did sing.

“Only a little though,” she added. “Only just enough to amuse the Commodore and myself while we are at sea. I couldn’t think of inflicting my songs on a real audience, you know.”

“Oh, we are not real; please let us have a chance to hear you,” I begged, with some feeling.

The others joined in my entreaty and, after a moment, Mrs. Chandler consented. But I noticed

that Mrs. Kapua and the Commodore had sauntered out under the algeroba trees at the other end of the garden, before she said yes, and it occurred to me that she thought the Commodore might disapprove, as he had of her dancing.

After we finished our coffee, Mrs. Chandler went to the piano. She sang a couple of ballads, very short, very light, with easily caught refrains, the regular once-heard-always-whistled kind of music known as "popular." Her next song was one in which a patriotic story was unfolded, in verses of a simplicity that required no mental effort. She enunciated clearly; every word was distinct, and although her voice was not strong, it was fresh and sweet, and her power of dramatic expression was remarkable. The chorus was stirring, and she gave it with vim.

"Wouldn't it be effective in short skirts, black stockings, and waving an American flag?" whispered Frank.

I smiled—faintly. It did suggest something of the sort. But, before I could answer, Frank had turned away to listen to Ah Lung, who had come in with a message which he was imparting in his peculiar Chinese-Hawaiian-English lingo. Summing it up, it amounted to a request to Frank to meet some one at the side door.

After he had gone out, Mrs. Chandler sang a coon song and then, in response to our delighted appreciation, another. Billy Barker hung enrap-

tured over the piano, and Mrs. Spotfield hung too, but judging by her expression, her faculty for criticism was unimpaired. Guy Selby knew each song, and whistled a low accompaniment that seemed to act as a spur to Mrs. Chandler.

“Now I’ll give you another kind,” she said.

This one was a pathetic ballad picturing an ungrateful daughter lured by the glamour of stage life, and champagne suppers, from her country home and her poor, old father’s side, finally to return, disillusioned, to the farm—and presumably hard cider.

Mrs. Chandler’s repertoire was certainly varied; she had been too modest about her talent. While Mrs. Thornton was reproaching her for having kept this accomplishment a secret so long, I was wondering where Frank could be and what the messenger had wanted.

“I never sang for a more appreciative audience!” Mrs. Chandler rose from the piano stool, as the Commodore reappeared with Mrs. Kapua. “But, we must be going, indeed we must; it takes longer than you’d think to reach the *Gelda*. Next time you come on board, I’ll sing for you again.”

“Just one more coon song before you go!” begged Billy Barker.

“And that first little ballad, just once more!” added Guy Selby.

With a laugh that was half indulgent, and half pleasurable excitement, Mrs. Chandler began to sing

softly, almost as though she were talking to the music; the amount of expression she threw into the words making up for the lack of voice accompaniment.

Frank returned, as she finished the first verse.

“Come outside with me,” he said in a low tone, “I have something to tell you.”

I shook my head. “We can’t leave in the middle of her song,” I whispered.

But Frank muttered something I couldn’t quite catch; I looked at him in surprise. His face was stern, his mouth drawn into a straight line that read: “Do or die!” or something equally resolved.

I had not noticed before that in his hand he held a letter. It had been torn open. I could see that the stamp was foreign. But how did a letter to Frank get to Mrs. Thornton’s house?

All at once, I felt a little frightened. I rose, and with a motion to Frank to follow me, I slipped into the farthest corner, near one of the big palms.

“What is it?” I cried. “What is the matter? What did the messenger want?”

“It was my mail from Japan. I left orders to have it sent to me; my boy took it to my house, and as I was not there, he tried yours, knowing it was important. Tumi sent him here.”

“No bad news, I hope?” I asked, though wondering what bad news could come from Japan.

Frank did not answer. Mrs. Chandler’s song had come to an end; she and the Commodore had left

the group around the piano, and were walking towards us together.

“Will you come to us on the *Gelda*, Thursday, for a little dance?” asked the Commodore cordially, when they reached us. “We want to have a few friends on board, to celebrate your engagement.”

“How kind of you!” I cried.

“I am sorry,” said Frank slowly and very distinctly, “but I decline, we decline, to accept your hospitality.”

There was a dead pause. Guy Selby was playing rag-time; the others were humming a gay accompaniment in various keys. The Commodore gave a quick glance over his shoulder, towards the piano and around the room, but no one was near and his bold eyes returned to us and flashed from the letter in Frank’s hand to his face, and rested there with a challenge that Frank met squarely.

Mrs. Chandler was white to her lips, except where her cheeks stayed brightly pink.

“You will explain!” muttered the Commodore furiously.

“I will,” answered Frank firmly.

“Later,” the Commodore added.

And giving his arm to his wife, they turned without another word, and left us.

“Frank!” I gasped.

“Hush,” he whispered, “no one has heard,—no one knows; wait for me here.”

He started to go outside, and I saw him make

a signal to Mr. Thornton, who abruptly left the group about the piano and joined him.

I hesitated a moment and then followed Mrs. Chandler into Mrs. Thornton's room, where I knew she must have gone to get her gloves and veil. I didn't know what I intended to do, but somehow I couldn't let her go like that. She had been one of us.

She was standing in front of the mirror and, as I went in, I could see her reflection and I knew that although she gazed into the glass, she did not see herself, but was looking through it, and beyond.

She turned, with a start, as I appeared behind her. I don't know what she saw in my eyes, as she looked into them, but her face softened.

"Look here, *chère amie*," she said, "the game is up and I know it. But, what to you would be a tragedy, to me is only an episode. If the ship sinks, I'll float; if the Commodore goes down with her,—well—" she shrugged her shoulders, "well, as far as I am concerned, there are just as good fish in the sea. Don't waste any feeling on me; I'm not in your class, that's all."

She took off the *lei* of carnations she wore, and threw it over my head.

"Good-by," she said, from the doorway, pretty, pink, and smiling, as she blew me a kiss.

XXI.

WHEN I returned to the *lanai*, Mrs. Thornton asked me into what kind of mischief Frank had led her husband; had I seen them go out the gate, and where had they gone?

I could truthfully answer I did not know.

And there we sat. Mrs. Kapua had gone home; the party was almost broken up; the few that were left were presumably enjoying the repose of the *lanai*. I, feeling as if I were on the edge of a volcano, and not an extinct one either, would rather have been anywhere else. I had no chance to speak to Mrs. Thornton alone and I could think of no excuse to get her outside.

Adrienne and Cherub appeared to say good-by. They pleaded an engagement and Guy chuckled audibly. How much he knew, I could not tell, but there was no doubt he would have it in for Cherub for many days to come.

As they went off, Mrs. Spotfield said: "Oh, that Cherub Billkins! I have no patience with such a flirt; I do hope Miss Singlee understands."

"She does understand," I said promptly.

And the subject was dropped.

At last Guy Selby rose to take his leave and lingered still beside me, with a "Parting is such sweet sorrow" look in his eyes that he could not quite give up, even if I was a disappointment to him.

By the time he was really off, Mrs. Spotfield and

Billy Barker made a start. And I recalled the lessons I had received in my early youth to the effect that when you start to go, do it.

But I had plenty of time to recite all the lessons on etiquette I'd ever absorbed while they thought of just one more thing to say, and as they were finally leaving, a hack dashed up, and Mr. Thornton and Frank jumped out.

They stood at the bottom of the steps, a congenial little group of friends with, no doubt, much to discuss, and plenty of time for it. Of course Mr. Thornton, as host, could not be in a hurry—

But Frank—

He threw a glance in my direction. I continued to live, though perhaps not to thrive, on the glance.

As the carriage drove off, with Mrs. Spotfield and Billy Barker, Mr. Thornton and Frank ran quickly up the steps. Mrs. Thornton was arranging the cushions in the hammock; her husband put his hand on her arm and turned her to him.

“Who would ever have dreamt——” he began, gazing at the ornament in her hair. He dived into his pocket and when he took out his hand and opened it, there lay the fac-simile of the sunburst she was wearing, and each shone, and sparkled, as if in defiance of the other to outshine in magnificence.

Mrs. Thornton raised her hand to her head; I never saw any one appear more dazed. Probably I looked the same; I felt so.

“Frank,” I said, “Fra-a-ank.” My voice

trembled; no appeal from the heart ever sounded more pitiful.

"Well, here are the documents in the case," said Frank; he took some letters from his pocket. "This is my correspondence with John Boynton."

Mrs. Thornton and I broke forth with a dozen questions all at once, but Mr. Thornton told Frank to begin at the beginning and let us have the whole story.

"I must tell you that almost from the first I distrusted the Commodore, the yacht, the Doctor—the entire outfit, in short," said Frank. "And yet it seemed madness to suspect a man of the Commodore's apparent wealth and position. But I felt justified in my prejudice against him when he gambled to such an extent that it seemed like a business with him. The games on the yacht were only a side issue of course; the rumors of poker on shore were what looked shady to me. When Billy Barker continued to lose staggering sums of money, when Guy Selby and Jo Elkins were continually suggesting a game—just to make up their losses—I decided to investigate. I wrote for information to my old friend John Boynton in Japan, knowing that the *Gelda* had lately been in Yokohama.

"It was about this time that Mrs. Thornton's diamonds disappeared. I began to watch the Commodore in earnest. This was easy enough to do through Mrs. Kapua; he was usually hanging around her. I've always liked Mrs. Kapua, but we

had never been more than the most casual acquaintances. When I started to cut the Commodore out, or rather to share his popularity with her, it was an easy matter because Mrs. Kapua is used to devotion; she accepted mine without question. At once, we became the best of friends. I wanted to go on the *Gelda* to see a game; she took me. I sized up the Doctor easily enough as a card sharp, but the precious pair lost that night. I might have been sure they wouldn't win before me. They were clever enough to run the game way up and lose a thousand between them. But I happened to know it was a mere drop in the bucket.

"Unconsciously Mrs. Kapua, from time to time, would give me a tip as to what the Commodore was doing, when a game was on, etc. Through her I learned, too, that the Commodore had borrowed one of her cottages, that happened to be vacant, for the convalescence of his Captain who had been ill, and who needed quiet and rest. The explanation satisfied Mrs. Kapua of course.

"I located the cottage and interviewed the neighbors, and putting two and two together, I came to the conclusion that it was used as a regular gambling resort, conducted by the Captain and Doctor, with the Commodore as a regular visitor. I got Mrs. Kapua to take me up there, under pretense of examining the title, and I studied the lay of the land. She suspected nothing; I left her outside, while I went through the house and found

enough cards, and poker chips, and gambling paraphernalia to run Monte Carlo.

"Still, I could hardly have put my vague suspicions into an accusation; but Boynton's letter here, confirms the worst of them."

"The worst of them!" cried Mrs. Thornton excitedly. "What is the worst? Who took my diamonds? I will never believe the Commodore did. He may gamble—but steal,—the Commodore! Never—I'll never believe it. Perhaps the Doctor; I never liked him, but how—how could he—"

"Listen to the letter, dear," said Mr. Thornton, putting his hand gently over hers.

Frank took the sheet from the envelope and opened it. "The photograph to which Boynton refers," he began, "is a snapshot I took of the Commodore and his wife, without their knowing it, when I found it impossible to get their pictures otherwise.

"Dear Frank: The photograph you sent me is unmistakably that of Harry St. Clair, although in the picture his hair seems dark and he wears a moustache. When we knew him here, his hair was light and he was smooth shaven. Harry St. Clair is the king of modern swindlers and he found our little community dead easy. Soon after his arrival he was put up at the Club by two Englishmen, well-known fellows among us. Because of his genial manners and lavish ways, he soon became a welcome visitor. He gave entertainments on board his yacht

on a generous scale; still a poker atmosphere pervaded everything in his vicinity. His departure was sudden and well timed; that's one thing about St. Clair, we have since heard,—he knows when it's time to go.

“ ‘ Harry St. Clair has wrung thousands from people under the very noses of the police, though he has a record that covers England, South America, China, Samoa, Australia, and a few other countries —perhaps by this time Hawaii.

“ ‘ With his good address, social adaptability, plenty of assurance, and “ways that are dark,” he has not found any difficulty in living like a millionaire in each port. The *Gelda* has been sailed on tempting mining enterprises and other choice investments, in addition to bogus land schemes, drafts cashed for the Commodore’s benefit, but never honored, and poker. He had incorporated a company to take over a whole Island, rich in guano, having secured the option to purchase it from a native ruler. The seeming scarcity of the stocks he let his friends in on and the obligation it put them under to secure some through his generosity, made him still more popular.

“ ‘ Wherever he has stopped, St. Clair, who poses as the Commodore of the Atlantic Yacht Club, has borrowed money; in some places he has borrowed jewelry, without saying: “By your leave.” Generally he returned it promptly—and always with paste, which brings me to the Doctor—Dr. Stirling

Dwinelle, "of the New York Dwinelles, you know." Unless he has acquired a new alias, I can hear the precious Commodore getting that off. Little is known of the Doctor, except that he is suspected of being an ex-jewel-designer, who is useful to the Commodore when he wants to replace the real ornaments, he has taken, with paste. The Commodore is known to have a collection from the *Palais Royale* of considerable value, comprising stars, crescents, sunbursts, birds, insects,—all the latest designs known to the jeweller's art. But his imitations could scarcely be exact enough to deceive without the Doctor's knowledge of stone setting. In his leisure hours he comes in handy for the card games; he's a professional all right, as we know now, to our cost, and an expert accomplice for the Commodore; two such crooked card players have never struck Yokohama before.

"St. Claire's wife was a vaudeville artist of some renown as a dancer. She was known on the stage as: *Fidette*. Her picture is still a favorite seller. At first she was a bit stand-offish and did not seem to care to meet every one; evidently she was afraid of being recognized. But although she looked familiar to some of the fellows who met her, no one placed her until after the *Gelda* had sailed and the facts began to drift out. There's no harm in Mrs. Chandler; she is in with a rascal, that's all, and is useful to him as a decoy. He finds out the richest detached man, and Mrs. Chandler does the

rest. The poker games come later. She has a perfume named after her and if you ever come across a cigar called "*The Fidette*," smoke it and forget your troubles.

"Mrs. Chandler really has talent, they say, but perhaps her chief claim to notoriety was through her association with "The Only Otto," as he was billed. They were doing a sketch together in New York, when he was dashed to death while making a sensational flight in an aeroplane.'"

"That—that was 'Prince Otto,'" I stammered.

"He got mixed in the shuffle," said Frank. "She may have thought him a Prince of good fellows, but he really got among the others by accident."

"And the sunburst Mrs. Kapua found—this one?" Mrs. Thornton took it out of her hair; her tone was dazed.

"Paste," said Mr. Thornton. "Paste, of course; a clever enough imitation to deceive any one but an expert."

"Think of it," murmured Mrs. Thornton, evidently trying very hard to think.

"You see," said Frank, "during one of the Commodore's visits to Mrs. Kapua, it was easy enough to fasten the bogus pin to the portière, equally easy to suggest to Yone to look there without her even knowing that her simple mind was being led. In the first place, when the lights went

out at the *luau*, the Commodore was standing by the switch. One button served for *lanai* and living room; the Commodore lives on chance—he took the chance. From my position, I could see the reflection of a light burning in the mosquito room, in the back of the house; afterwards I discovered there was no lamp in the room and I knew that the Commodore must have been responsible for the extinguished lights; there was nothing the matter with the electricity. Even then, I could hardly bring myself to suspect him of actual theft and thought he must have pressed the button either by mistake, or through a spirit of mischief.

“When day after day passed and the pin was not recovered, I became more and more convinced that he was a common thief. I could scarcely believe my senses at last when Mrs. Kapua appeared with the diamonds. Then came Boynton’s letter, in the very nick of time. You see, the Commodore was paving the way for his departure. He knew perfectly well that I suspected him. There must have been some hitch to account for his not having the paste imitation ready sooner. Or else he had grown so reckless that he was careless, which is more likely. Of course he showed, when he tried to throw suspicion upon me, that he was a little too sure of his position here. He thought I’d be an effectual scapegoat until he got a chance to replace the pin. All criminals go too far; in one way or

another they overstep the bounds of prudence ; they always leave a clue."

Mrs. Thornton's cheeks were flushing and paling ; her eyes were bright with excitement.

" But, what did you do, George ? " she asked. " Where have you been ? How did you get my own pin ? What did the Commodore say ? "

" We followed him down to the yacht, stopping on the way for the Marshal, who accompanied us on board with a couple of his men. We faced the Commodore with the mail from Japan and supplemented a demand for the original stones with a few persuasive arguments. But nothing seemed to make the slightest impression on him ; not for a moment did he drop his defiant attitude. After in vain threatening him with exposure, arrest, disgrace, we at last hit upon an idea that appealed to him. We offered to keep the whole affair quiet until he got away, if he would return the genuine stones, and I proposed to sign a paper to the effect that I would let the matter drop and not prosecute him now, nor in the future. This, coupled with the alternative of immediate arrest and a search of the *Gelda* from bow to stern, touched the right spot, and in a few moments more everything was settled to our mutual satisfaction. The Marshal is going out to-morrow though on a visit of enquiry about the card games. But there's one thing I don't understand, Frank, and that is why he gave us that triumphant look when we were leaving."

"He was probably thinking of the stock he's been letting his particular friends come in on. I'll wager the quotations will show a heavy decline before long. I must say it was only lack of funds that saved me."

"And perhaps some common sense," said Mr. Thornton grimly. "I took a flyer myself, you know."

Mrs. Thornton looked at her sunburst, and then at Frank. "How can we ever thank you!" she cried. In her pretty, impetuous way, she flung both arms around him and kissed him twice.

"How can we ever thank you?" Frank said very earnestly. "Mr. Thornton has retained me in the case of *Aloha* against *Leiilima*."

"That's nice," said Mrs. Thornton calmly, and quite as if she had known all about it; "and the Stowe estate, Frank—if you settle that up too quickly, you're not the good lawyer that we think you."

Frank smiled broadly. "I was keeping that for a surprise," he said, looking at me.

And I found that I still had reflections on surprise parties in reserve. Mr. Thornton was administrator of the Stowe estate. Mrs. Thornton had said she was sure it was only money that kept Frank and me apart; it was through her the barrier had been removed. I began to see it all now—all that she had done.

"Dear Fairy Godmother," I whispered, as I kissed her good-by.

"But this doesn't count for an engagement breakfast, does it, George?" she said as she and Mr. Thornton followed us to the steps.

"Of course not," Mr. Thornton promptly responded. "It has developed into a farewell party to a beach comber."

"We'll have a dinner," said Mrs. Thornton. "Now when——"

"Suppose we say after our wedding tour," said Frank. "I shall have to be back for *Aloha* against *Leiilima*, so we ought to get started soon, you see."

"Oh, all right; we'll wait then," said Mrs. Thornton, with genuine warmth of acquiescence—which, in the circumstances was not equivocal.

When we got home, Frank asked me if I would like to go to Europe for our wedding tour.

I had decided not to take the trip alone, so we were able to come to an agreement on this.

"*Aloha* against *Leiilima*," murmured Frank. "Our fortune is made. The biggest case in Hawaii is mine." He looked very happy.

I slipped my hand into his and we did not speak for a long time. At last Frank sighed; a deep sigh, the kind that is usually described as coming from the boots.

"It wasn't an honest part I was playing," he said. "Mrs. Kapua was unsuspecting and I

wormed myself into her confidence, took advantage of her credulity, entered her house as a friend to play the spy, and deliberately kept our engagement secret to make her believe that all my devotion was hers."

"Why didn't you tell me, Frank?" I whispered.
"Why didn't you explain?"

"But I didn't have to explain to you," said Frank, with an infinite trust. "Between you and me, there is no need of that; there never will be, you know."

"All right, Frank," I said sunnily, looking straight at the lapel of his coat.

"Yes, I played the spy," continued Frank gloomily. "It isn't work to look back on and make a man feel proud of himself,—but there was much at stake, too much."

"It was her favorite pin," I said soothingly.
"It wasn't only its value."

"I don't mean the sunburst," said Frank, "I mean you."

"What about me?" I asked slowly.

"The sunburst you know," said Frank.

I glanced up. "I don't think I quite follow you."

"Dearest," said Frank gently, "I could not stand a breath of suspicion against you. You know that; the very possibility of it——" He almost shuddered.

This time I looked at Frank, right at him.

“Suspicion, once started, is an ugly thing to cope with,” he added.

It was a familiar thought to me.

“But you were never in danger, dear; She isn’t that sort.”

I shut my eyes, and opened them again. Everything was topsy turvy, and all was unreal. The paste jewels, the wealthy Commodore, the ex-jeweller, my danger,—mine; danger for me!

“What made you think I was in danger?” I asked. My voice sounded as dazed as I felt.

“From what you told me of course,” said Frank simply.

And I recalled the circumstantial evidence I had interposed to persuade Frank of my threatening doom; it had been complete enough to convince a lawyer. When I had convinced him, when it had served its purpose,—I felt a hot blush mount to my brow,—I had forgotten it.

“I made up my mind,” said Frank, “that no such rumor, as you foresaw, should ever get started. Of course I was disturbed, and I saw the possibility of danger for you that you had pointed out, but I would not let you know that I was uneasy. If Mrs. Kapua did not like you, if with her reputed *kahuna* power, she could work you harm, it was my place to divert that harm. The way was simple; to keep our engagement secret was the first step. When I began to be attentive to Mrs. Kapua, it was because of you. I did not believe that she cared a

rap for my attentions, as you thought, but at least I was at hand to see if she was starting any rumors against you. I soon found that we did her an injustice, but I also found that through her I could watch the Commodore. No one but you understood what lay beneath my pretended devotion. You knew all; the clue was in your hands, for you had given it to me. My clever little sweetheart!"

I could only hope that Frank was satisfied with his view of the top of my head. I was pleased that my hair was a nice shade of brown, or at least that he approved of the color. I certainly did not feel clever enough to raise my head and look the part. So I rested it more comfortably against his coat, and thought, and thought, and thought.

And finally I told Frank he must go to Mrs. Kapua that evening and tell her everything. She had liked the Commodore, she would miss him. She had been taken in, perhaps more than any of the rest of us. It was only fair she should hear it all, and hear it from Frank who would unfold to her the ugly truth as gently as he could.

"I was thinking of that," said Frank.

And I was proud of him; glad to have him remember her now, right in the midst, at the height, of our own happiness, with our future clear and assured.

There was another silence and my thoughts wandered away from Mrs. Kapua, and came back to the yacht, to the Commodore, and to his wife.

“Poor, pretty Fidette!” I murmured.

The pink carnation *lei* was wilted and I took it off and laid it gently down. Somehow I felt as if a gay, showy butterfly had floated in and out amongst us, just within our reach, at last, where our cruel grasp had bruised her fragile wings before we let her go.

I told Frank how she had left me, how careless she had seemed, how free.

“She was game,” said Frank, “but she is light as a feather; this is only a yachting trip to her; she will snap her fingers at the Commodore, at the end of their cruise, wave him a careless good-by, and forget him. She’s sure to return to the stage, and perhaps some day we will hear of her making a great hit as a dancer, with the *hula kui* for her star attraction.”

“But I wish,—I wish they had got off,” I said.

“Don’t let your little heart ache for her,” said Frank, putting both arms tenderly about me; “there are plenty of Fidettes in every land, and they never know a heart ache. There’s only just one YOU in all the world, and you shall never have one, if I can help it.”

XXII

BRIGHT and early Monday morning, the Marshal, quite prepared to investigate the sort of poker game in which the Commodore had been indulging, stood on the wharf, rubbed his eyes and looked again.

But the luxurious little *Gelda* no longer rode at anchor in the harbor of Honolulu.

I, for one, drew a long breath of relief, when Frank told me.

“Mrs. Kapua’s ruby pendant will help float the yacht until the Commodore thinks it advisable to move on once more,” he said.

“Oh!” I exclaimed. “Oh-h-h—did he take that too?”

“No,” said Frank, “he accepted it. She gave it to him.”

“She gave him her beautiful, gorgeous, becoming, ruby pendant!” I cried. “Are you sure? Perhaps she only lent it to him; it has dangled temporarily from a few watch chains, Frank; you know that.”

“Not this time,” said Frank. “She is true, when it comes to the pinch. When I started to tell her about the Commodore and his record, she had already guessed a lot. The Commodore had a chance, you see, to speak to her yesterday, before he left Mrs. Thornton’s. And he got in some big licks. He told her he was in trouble and that some

day he would explain; things looked bad—he was too proud to try and straighten them out now; there was a reason why he must be silent, and so forth, etcetera. Mrs. Kapua told me, with tears in her eyes that he had said: ‘I will always remember the Flower of Waikiki; don’t forget me, and sometimes think kindly if you can. I’m not all good, but you could have made a man of me—a woman like you——’ And then he had choked.

“ You know the Commodore; and he knows women. Mrs. Kapua impetuously tore off her ruby pendant and ‘ forced it on him.’

“ Her heart was touched, of course. She will never believe the worst of the Commodore. If she did, it would be just the same. The Hawaiian woman, the finer type, clings to the man who has a place in her heart, when he is down and out. Light, careless, fickle, easily swerved, she may be, but once let the man she is favoring get into trouble and she will help him, every time. She will stick to him then—stick to him through thick and thin.”

“ But to whom,” I cried, “ to whom did she stick? ”

I recalled her innuendoes against Frank and at last the change of heart that had made her interpose to help him out of an unpleasant situation. She had made the Porto Rican thief serve her purpose so well that no one had stopped to reflect he was only a sneak thief, whose petty pilferings had scarcely aroused the police to concerted action.

Had Mrs. Kapua really thought Frank guilty? Or, had she suspected the Commodore, after all? From which of them had she hoped to avert suspicion? Which had she tried to protect, to save? When the diamonds were first lost, she had tried to implicate Frank. Had she done so in behalf of the Commodore, or was it merely, as I had thought at the time, out of revenge for an indifference that had infuriated her? And when Frank's attentions to her had changed her attitude towards him, when she had perhaps grown to care for him as she had grown to know him, and to know his attraction, had she wavered between the two men with a loyalty that was divided?

“Frank,” I persisted, having received no answer from him, “to whom did Mrs. Kapua stick?”

It did not sound elegant; repetition hadn’t improved it, but it was simple, and to the point.

“Why, to the Commodore, of course,” said Frank, giving me a little pat, as though to say: “Come to.” “To the Commodore, of course, dear. Who else?”

“But,” I began, trying hard to think it out, “she wanted to save you, too; she must have thought of the Porto Rican to divert suspicion from you, and from you alone. The Commodore was never, for an instant, distrusted,—and she knew that you were.”

“I!” Frank paused; his brows met in a deep frown. “I?”

“Having no money, of course, and the Commodore with seemingly fabulous wealth,—you can see the inference.”

Frank looked at me searchingly. “Do you mean to tell me that I was ever suspected of stealing the sunburst? Was I? I must say, that never occurred to me.”

“Well,—I began to feel as if I were on the witness stand,—“well, you see, that is, of course, you can see, that you couldn’t escape your share of gossip; there is sure to be some one to imply disagreeable things about every one, we know that. Anyway, whether for you, or for the Commodore, or for both of you, we will always remember that Mrs. Kapua, as you say, was true when it came to the pinch.”

“And did you know?” asked Frank slowly. “Did you know about me? Did you know that I——”

“Oh yes,” I said carelessly, “nothing tangible, though, or I would have told you—just implications, things you couldn’t put your finger on—such silly things——”

I waited for Frank to snap his fingers at the world.

At last he said: “Ah-h-h——.” And that was all; it was half a sigh and half a groan, and he looked gloomy in the extreme.

“Of course we believe—she believes—I have believed—in your innocence,” I ventured.

Frank rose and paced the *lanai*.

"What is the difference?" I murmured consolingly. "It is over now."

Still Frank did not reply. "You thought me in trouble," he muttered at last. "You accepted me through pity!"

I gasped. Love is indeed blind. Filled with wonder that he could be so dense, I did not speak for a moment. And while sunk in a reverie, memory awoke; I was plunged into an abyss of doubt.

"I told you that I was in trouble," I said, "and you proposed to me—then!" My voice was full of tears.

"But, after all, pity is akin to love," Frank began more cheerfully, breaking in on a long silence.

"Take all my pity then," I said generously.

"I need it—I've given you all my love!"

"I'll take back my pity and make it a fair exchange!" I declared.

And Frank said that if I was not lavish, at least I was a lightning calculator.

This was too much for me to figure out, however, and I did not try.

"Frank," I said, attempting a lightness of tone that proved most solemn. "Frank, perhaps you were, just a wee bit, you know, jealous of Guy Selby. Were you?"

"I was," said Frank; he looked rather ashamed. "But how could I help it? It was not that my trust in you was not complete. But I could not

help seeing his devilish ease, his good looks, and that assurance, you know—an everyday, prosaic, business man cannot compete with the breezy gallantry of the sailor. You might have drawn the contrast."

"I did," I said, and I smiled at Frank. "Wait a moment," I added, as he came towards me; and I put out a restraining hand. "I might as well confess to you that I was perhaps a trifle jealous too."

"Oh, nonsense; jealous—you——!"

"I couldn't help seeing her fascination. Her hands, her voice, her grace, her beauty,—the Flower of Waikiki."

"Dear little girl," said Frank, "you are the Flower of Waikiki, the Flower of the World, to me. I had to shut my eyes to see Mrs. Kapua, and I had to open them to try and remember she was there. How could you—YOU—ever be jealous of any woman? I love you."

"But Frank, I love you too; how could you ever be jealous of any man?"

"Ah," said Frank, "but that, dear Heart, is such a very, very different thing."

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